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VINDICATION

OF

LADY BYRON.

"Will it ever be,
That to deserve too much is dangerous,
And virtue, when too eminent, a crime?"

MASSINGER.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY & SON, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
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NOTE.

The immediate cause of the publication of this defence of Lady Byron, written early in the year 1870, is an article in the 'Edinburgh Review' for April, 1871, upon the late Lord Broughton's (John Cam Hobhouse) MS. Recollections of his Life. A very few words in reply to so much of that article as concerns the present controversy will add all that is necessary to Lady Byron's vindication. Lord Broughton asserts, "it was not fear, on the part of Lord Byron, that persuaded him to separate from his wife." The words do not exactly describe the case of a husband who, having repeatedly refused to separate, submitted to separation after a threat of an appeal to the law; and the boldest assertion of a friend's opinion can weigh nothing against the certain facts. Lord Broughton does not tell us what *was* the motive, and the words, "it was not fear on the part of Lord Byron," may cover many meanings. If he had thought fit, Lord Broughton might have asserted his conviction that his friend was guiltless. He does not seem to have gone so far as that.

He says that he consulted Lord Holland as to the expediency of giving some public refutation of Lady Byron's defence of her father and mother, which he calls a "charge," an "attack," and that Lord Holland "strongly recommended silence, and did not scruple to say that the lady would be more annoyed if she were left unnoticed, than if, whether wrong or right, she had to figure in a controversy." Lord Holland's advice may not justify the conclusion that he believed Lord Byron to be guilty, but, certainly, a contrary conclusion cannot be drawn. If he had been sure of the guilt, he could have given no wiser counsel than "Be still."

June, 1871.

PREFACE.

From the year 1818 down to the year 1869 it had been commonly supposed that because Lady Byron would not return to her husband, she must have been a cold, precise, pharisaical, unloving, unforgiving woman; and that in their separation faults were to be found on both sides. It seemed hard that one generation after another should be taught to believe such things of a woman pure, and true, and bright, and amiable, to whom riches, rank, graces, and understanding had been given as though to deck her for sacrifice; who had suffered so much, had borne her sufferings so nobly, and had done so much to soften the sufferings of others. Under that feeling the first of the following papers, 'Lord Byron's Married Life,' was written, to show, by proofs drawn wholly from Thomas Moore's 'Life of Lord Byron,' and Lord Byron's poems themselves, that, in the judgment of Dr. Lushington, Lady Byron could not have returned to her husband, after their separation, without a violation of her

duty both to God and man. Assuming that she spoke truth to Dr. Lushington, this is not now disputed. Until July, 1869, her truth had never been called in question. But in that month there appeared in 'Blackwood's Magazine' a review of the 'Recollections of the Countess Guiccioli,' in which the reviewer accused Lady Byron of being a moral Brinvilliers, a slanderer more guilty than if she had uttered a bold falsehood. Then, the second of the following papers, 'The Character of Lady Byron,' was written to show, out of the mouth of Lord Byron himself, that whatever his wife had said to Dr. Lushington was true.

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 416.

Meanwhile, in September, Mrs. Stowe had published her 'True Story.' She charged Lord Byron with a crime, in which another person of unspotted name was involved, and founded the charge upon hearsay from his wife, not careful to be ready with proof to confirm the accusation in case Lady Byron should be accused of having invented the story. She did not perceive that it was altogether needless for Lady Byron's vindication to convict Lord Byron of a particular offence, nor foresee that there would be a universal outcry against the cruelty and injustice of publishing to the world, after a lapse of fifty years, the guilt of one, whom, according to her own story, Lady Byron declared to have been repentant and truly good. She did not consider that she exposed Lady Byron's memory, without

defence, to the honest indignation of the relations and friends of the accused. How could it be imagined that those who had long loved and honoured the memory of a friend would accept such a tale upon Mrs. Stowe's word, or upon the bare word of Lady Byron? They did well to disbelieve. They had the right to adopt Thomas Moore's theory,—to look upon a train of evidence from the year 1813 to the year 1817 as nothing more than proof of an imposture by which Lord Byron deceived his wife. For those who, unmoved by favour or affection, can neither receive that theory, nor reject the sure evidence of Lady Byron's purity and truth, and of Lord Byron's guilt, Mrs. Stowe has made it impossible to find out a way for justice to Lady Byron without touching the memory of the sister whom she once loved, and desired to love to the end.

There are men in the world who profess to see in Lady Byron a woman so perverted that she must be held in contempt and abhorrence by the lowest prostitute that ever haunted the night houses of the Haymarket. Others boast that they have built an altar of incense to the moral character of Lord Byron, and, with Mrs. Stowe for an accomplice, have canonised the sinner. That which Mrs. Stowe failed to perceive was not hidden from them. They saw that, although it was not easy to refute the conclusion drawn from Lord Byron's conduct, that *a* cause

'Blackwood,' January, 1870, pp. 123 to 125. 'Quarterly,' October, 1869, pp. 400 to 401, 416, 443, 566. January, 1870, p. 250.

did exist which tainted his name and banished him from England, it *was* easy, turning aside from that task, to deny the particular charge which, as they imagined, depended wholly upon the mere word of Lady Byron, and to impute to her a foul calumny. Accordingly they acquitted Mrs. Stowe of having forged the story, and condemned Lady Byron as the author of an invention of the vilest kind.

In October, the 'Quarterly Review' repeated an old plea, that Lord Byron's confessions of guilt were not to be believed, because it was his custom to accuse himself of impossible vices; and, producing out of a large mass, some seven letters, and fragments of letters, written in January and February, 1816, by Lady Byron to Mrs. Leigh, in words of sisterly affection, compared them with Mrs. Stowe's 'Story,' defied the advocates of Lady Byron to find confirmatory proof of the accusation, or a loophole for her escape, boasted to have cut away the ground on which such antagonists might have recommenced their dirty work, and concluded that, even if the charge against Mrs. Leigh were true, Lady Byron stood convicted of connivance, and a long course of dissimulation and hypocrisy.

In reply to the 'Quarterly Review,' the third of the following papers, 'The Bride of Abydos,' was written. In this paper the moral impossibility that a woman whose truth, purity, and innocence of sin had been established upon a foundation not to be

shaken, could have been guilty of the infamous crime imputed to her, was urged. In answer to the challenge to find confirmatory proof, it was asked whether there was nothing in the rest of the correspondence to throw light upon the selected letters? Why, among more than six hundred letters of Lord Byron published by Moore, there was not one to Mrs. Leigh, with whom, after the year 1816, he had been in constant correspondence? Why did not they who held in their hands the means of explanation, explain how it happened, if Lady Byron had invented an odious charge which banished her husband and tainted his name, that Mrs. Leigh—the Augusta who never forsook him, who, to the last, watched over him with fond fidelity—did, with his sanction, continue in affectionate correspondence with his wife? The excuse, that he was a braggart of pretended crime, was swept away. It was shown out of his journal and letters from November, 1813, down to September, 1815, when he was betrothed to Miss Milbanke, that while living in the grossest sensuality—while adultery, in its worst form, was a jest between himself and his friend Mr. Moore—he was filled with horror and remorse for some secret sin in which one whose name was sacred and not to be revealed—a name that his trembling hand refused to write—was a partaker. It was shown that his journal, his letters, and a poem, 'The Bride of

Abydos,' as at first written, seemed to confess the guilt which Mrs. Stowe had reported, and to be incapable of any other interpretation; and it was suggested that the offence, having been repented and abjured before Lord Byron's marriage, and discovered and forgiven afterwards, there had been, on his part alone, during his marriage, a guilty desire to renew it, which was steadfastly resisted.

In January, 1870, Mrs. Stowe's 'History of the Byron Controversy' was published. Mingling in her mind the 'True Story,' and what had been said and written of and against it, she made the 'History' out of the mass; correcting, by information gained from the criticism which her first book provoked, her impressions of things told to her by Lady Byron. She had no confidence in her own memory. She believed that what she heard yesterday must have been consistent with the supposed truth that she learned to-day. In the 'Story' and in the 'History' she recounted what was said to her at her memorable interview with Lady Byron, and in neither did it appear that the offence which she reported had been averred to be the cause of separation. Yet, because she *believed* that it was the cause, when, in her 'History,' she came to the summary, the abridgment of the narrative, she added (what was not in the narrative itself) that Lady Byron had declared it to be the cause. This cannot be. It is possible that Lady Byron may have forgiven

and loved one who had been very guilty in a time past: it is impossible that she could have acted in concert with Mrs. Leigh as with a sister, could have given her name to a daughter, could have habitually addressed her in words of passionate affection, if, at that very period of time, she had determined to denounce her sister, unless a purpose—separation from her husband—however righteous, could be otherwise accomplished. By her 'True Story' Mrs. Stowe imposed the hateful task of proving a particular offence: by her 'History of the Byron Controversy' she made it necessary to prove that, although she meant to speak the truth, she herself is not to be believed. Lady Byron did *not* tell her that the offence which she has published to the world was the cause of separation.

In the same month in which the 'History' was published, the 'Quarterly Review' and 'Blackwood' shot their second flight against Lady Byron. They were not slow to avail themselves of Mrs. Stowe's testimony that the offence which she published was declared by Lady Byron to have been *the* cause of separation. If that were so, the letters of January and February were not consistent with fair dealing. It is probable that both the 'Review' and the 'Magazine' believed the contrary. But see-sawing between this and that as occasion required, although it had been averred that there were two distinct charges, it was now assumed that there was but

January, 1870.

one. The 'Magazine' came to the conclusion that such a woman as Lady Byron was too vile for the Haymarket. The 'Quarterly' boasted of having proved to demonstration either that she was guilty of an infamous invention, or, that, casting away natural piety and womanhood, she connived at a shameful crime, using it for a trap to accomplish her own wicked purpose; and concluded that Mrs. Stowe had made so bad a book for Lady Byron that the latter must lose in any event, or in whatever light she is regarded by posterity—that the time is past when Dr. Lushington could affect the impartial judgment of society by speaking out—that a bare statement made to him would now carry no more weight than the same statement (assuming it to be the same) made to Medora Leigh, or Mrs. Beecher Stowe.

pp. 244, 246.

These publications of January are answered by the fourth of the following papers—The 'Notes on Mrs. Stowe and her Reviewers.' Since the 'Quarterly' boasts of having canonised Lord Byron, something of his course, through the year of wedlock, is added to the sketches of his moral life before and after marriage, given in the 'Bride of Abydos' and the 'Married Life.' The 'Review of Poems from 1813 to 1817' shows how, continually, through that period, his imagination was filled with the one foul offence; how he began with trembling concealment, and, step by step, came at last to hold

up the crime as a thing to be avowed before the world, with defiance and scorn of censure.

The sum of the five papers is this: The charges against Lady Byron are answered by showing—in the 'Married Life,' that she was not cold, hard and unforgiving,—in 'The Character,' that whatever she spoke to Dr. Lushington was spoken truly,—in 'The Bride,' the 'Notes,' and the 'Review of Poems,' that what she told to Mrs. Stowe was true; that it was not *the* cause of separation told to Dr. Lushington; and that the letters of January and February are consistent with her knowledge of the existence, in a time past, of the offence which Mrs. Stowe has published to the world.

May, 1870.

VINDICATION OF LADY BYRON.

LORD BYRON'S MARRIED LIFE.*

[*First published 1st June, 1869.*]

"Vice ought to be a little more modest, and it must require impudence at least equal to the noble lord's other powers, to claim sympathy gravely for the *ennui* arising from his being tired of his wassailers and his paramours."

WALTER SCOTT, *April* 4, 1812.

"I do not believe, and I must say it in the very dregs of all this bitter business, that there ever was a better, or even a brighter, a kinder, or a more amiable and agreeable being than Lady B. I never had, nor can have, any reproach to make her while with me. Where there is blame it belongs to myself, and if I cannot redeem, I must bear it."

LORD BYRON, *March* 8, 1816.

"Time, however, cures everything; and even your book, Mr. Moore, may be the means of Lady Byron's character being better appreciated."

THOMAS CAMPBELL, *April* 1830.

IN a life of Lord Byron, prefixed to a new edition of his poetical works, in one handsome volume, offered on every railway platform through the

* The chief crisis of his personal story—that separation from Lady Byron, of which, after all that has been said and written, the real motives and circumstances remain as obscure as ever.

Lord Byron himself never knew the precise origin of his lady's resolution to quit his society in 1816.—*Lord Byron's Works.* Murray, 1832. Vol. x. p. 183. Note by Editor.

country at a price so marvellously small as to ensure the sale of an infinite number of copies, the author—who supposes that Lord Byron's married life was passed at Newstead—informs his readers that the cause of the poet's separation from his wife is a domestic mystery: that while she believed him to be insane, there could be no hope of reconciliation, and when she was assured of his sanity, she held that he was unpardonable, because the disrespect towards her had been intentional. He concludes that by kind treatment Lord Byron might have been certainly won to become a very loving husband, but his wife had really never loved him with that affection which smooths down so many of the asperities of married life.

That which had been long a mystery was revealed through the cruel indiscretion of Thomas Moore. Though the particular offence is *not*, the class to which it belongs *is* known. It was not neglect, nor bitter words, nor adultery, that made the separation final. The cause was this—Lady Byron, to use the words of her husband, had been taught that duty both to God and man forbade her to return to him.†

vol. iv. p. 221*.

* The references are to Murray's edition of Lord Byron's works, with notices of his life by Thomas Moore, in 17 volumes. 12mo. 1832-1833.

† "No sort of explanation could be had,
Save that her duty both to man and God
Required this conduct.
Don Juan, canto 1, stan. 27, vol. xv., p. 124.

If she could but have known the circumstances in which, for the second time, he asked her in marriage. He had, already, offered himself, either about January 1813 or October 1812, or, it may be, in the preceding September, when he was at Cheltenham, with the Melbournes and Cowpers. His offer was not accepted, but they corresponded as friends. On the 30th of November 1813, he wrote of her, in his private journal:—"Yesterday a very pretty letter from Annabella." "She is a very superior woman, and very little spoiled, which is strange in an heiress—a girl of twenty—a peeress that is to be in her own right—an only child, and a *savante* who has always had her own way. She is a poetess—a mathematician, a metaphysician, and yet withal, very kind, generous, and gentle, with very little pretension. Any other head would be turned with half her acquisitions, and a tenth of her advantages." About a year afterwards, "having neither hopes nor prospects, and scarcely even wishes," being "in some respects happy, but not in a manner which could or ought to last," feeling "quite enervated and indifferent," describing himself as "under bare poles on a lee-shore," uncertain whether he should founder, and entangled in two or three "perplexities" which he did not see his way through, he was strenuously advised by a friend to marry, and, after much discussion, consented. The next question was, whom should he choose? The

vol. iii. p. 113.

vol. ii. pp. 338, 310; vol. iii. p. 118; vol. ii. p. 173.

vol. ii. p. 285.

1814, August and September. vol. iii. pp. 102, 107, 115.

p. 113.

friend proposed one lady; and he named Miss Milbanke. The friend strongly objected to her, reminding him that he could not marry without money, that Miss Milbanke had no fortune at present, and, moreover, that she was a learned woman. Listening to these arguments, he made a proposal to the other lady, and was rejected. He was sitting with the friend when the refusal came. "You see," he said, "Miss Milbanke is to be the person;" and he wrote to her at the moment. His friend, still strongly remonstrating against the choice, read the letter, and said, "This is a very pretty letter; it is a pity it should not go. I never read a prettier." "Then," said Lord Byron, "it shall go."* It was sent, and, in Moore's words, the fiat of his fate was sealed. Miss Milbanke had loved him for two years; she now accepted him, and they were married.

vol. iii. pp. 118, 121, 122.

1815, 2 Jan. p. 139.

He wrote of her to his friends, coldly, perhaps, but, it may be, with no more than becoming reserve. His letters show in what estimation she was held in her own country, among her own people. "By the way, my wife elect is perfection, and I hear of nothing but her merits and her wonders, and that

vol. iii. p. 120.

* From Moore's recollections of Memoirs, which, upon Lord Byron's death, were burned at the instance of Mr. Hobhouse because they were too gross for publication. His memory was perhaps assisted by Mrs. Shelley's written recollection of the memoirs which she had read before they were given to Moore.—*Lord Russell's Life of Moore*, vol. v., pp. 173, 178, 196.

she is 'very pretty.' Her expectations, I am told, are great; but *what*, I have not asked. I have not seen her these ten months," "I certainly did not dream that she was attached to me, which it seems she has been for some time. I also thought her of a very cold disposition, in which I was also mistaken. It is a long story, and I won't trouble you with it. As to her virtues, &c., &c., you will hear enough of them (for she is a kind of *pattern* in the north), without my running into a display on the subject. It is well that *one* of us is of such fame, since there is sad deficit in the *morale* of that article upon my part, all owing to my 'bitch of a star,' as Captain Tranchmont says of his planet." "It is an old and (though I did not know it till lately) a *mutual* attachment." p. 121. p. 122.

It was not a happy omen that in the month before his marriage he was indulging those habits "of abstraction and self-study" which, according to his biographer, unfit "men of the higher order of genius" for domestic life, in suppers, brandy-and-water, and not a little laughter, at Douglas Kinnaird's, with Mr. Moore, Mr. Kean the actor, and Mr. Jackson the pugilist. Two weeks after his wedding-day he was jesting on his marriage in a strain from which ribalds shrink. Two weeks after his honeymoon, he proposed to Moore that they should travel together into Italy and Greece for a year, whether with or without their wives, as it p. 125. p. 137. p. 144. p. 149.

might be; and Moore having answered that he meant to travel abroad, but alone, Byron replied that he proposed to start much about the same time, and alone too.

pp. 149, 144, 145, 154. About a fortnight after the wedding the bride and bridegroom returned to her father's house at Seaham, where they passed some six weeks. Lord Byron had not looked forward with much pleasure to the visit. He had been married a fortnight,

19 Jan. p. 144. when he wrote, "Address your next to Seaham, Stockton-on-Tees, where we are going on Saturday (a bore, by the way) to see father-in-law, Sir Jacob, and my lady's lady-mother." However, Sir Ralph and Lady Noel were very kind and hospitable, and their son-in-law declared that he liked them and the place vastly, adding he hoped they would live many

p. 154. happy months, and that Bell (his wife) was in health and unvaried good-humour and behaviour.

p. 157. Lord Wentworth, too, her uncle, from whom she was to inherit seven or eight thousand a year, had been so very kind that Byron hardly knew how to wish him in heaven, if he could be comfortable on earth. There were already signs that he was weary

2 Feb. p. 146. of his married life. One little month from the wedding-day he was lusting after the "abstraction and self-study" which he had found at Douglas Kinnaird's. He wrote to Moore, "My papa, Sir Ralpho, hath recently made a speech at a Durham tax-meeting; and not only at Durham, but here,

several times since, after dinner. He is now, I believe, speaking it to himself (I left him in the middle) over various decanters, which can neither interrupt him nor fall asleep." "I must go to tea —damn tea. I wish it was Kinnaird's brandy, and with you to lecture me about it."* Again, exactly a month later, "I am in such a state of sameness and stagnation, and so totally occupied in consuming the fruits and sauntering, and playing dull games at cards, and yawning, and trying to read old Annual Registers and the daily papers, and gathering shells on the shore, and watching the growth of stunted gooseberry bushes in the garden, that I have neither time nor sense to say more than yours ever." And once more, within a week, "I have been very comfortable here, listening to that d—d monologue which elderly gentlemen call conversation, and in which my pious father-in-law

2 March. p. 152.

8 March. p. 154.

* The following sentences are copied from this letter, because they are instanced by Mr. Moore as a proof of Lord Byron's early conjugal affection:—"Since I wrote last I have been transferred to my father-in-law's, with my lady and my lady's maid, &c. &c., and the treacle-moon is over, and am awake, and find myself married. My spouse and I agree to —— and in —— admiration. Swift says, 'No wise man ever married;' but, for a fool, I think it the most ambrosial of all possible future states. I still think one ought to marry upon *lease*, but am very sure I should renew mine at the expiration, though next term were for ninety and nine years.

"I wish you would respond, for I am here 'oblitusque meorum, oblivescendus et illis.' Pray tell me what is going on in the way of intriguery, and how the w——s and rogues of the upper Beggars' Opera go on, or rather go off, in or after marriage; and who are going to break any particular commandments."

repeats himself every evening save one, when he played upon the fiddle."

pp. 196 to 198.

In these earlier letters, written within two months of the marriage, Mr. Moore found such signs of strong conjugal affection and bliss as stilled the fears which had haunted him, lest the happiness of Lord Byron should be endangered by the lot he had chosen for himself, in other words, by his marriage with such a woman as Miss Milbanke. But these indications of a contented heart soon ceased. The mention of the wife became more rare and formal, and there was observable a feeling of unquiet and weariness which brought back all the gloomy anticipations with which the biographer had, from the first, regarded the poet's fate. In the last letter before the separation, in which Lord Byron announced the birth of his daughter, there were longings for the other side of the Straits of Gibraltar, and for a sight of Olympus, and a sigh: "I have now been married a year on the second of this month. Heigh-ho!" in which Moore perceived some return of the restless and roving spirit which unhappiness or impatience always called up; and he knew that it was the habit of the writer's mind, under the pressure of disgust or disquiet, to seek relief in that sense of freedom which told him that there were homes for him elsewhere.

1816, 5 Jan. vol. iii. p. 195.

1815, 18 March. p. 157.

From his return to London until the day that his wife left him, a period of ten months, we have but

few and far-between glimpses of his domestic life. In the interval his daughter was born, and Lord Wentworth died. Of the expected birth, the father, many months before it happened, wrote that it was a subject upon which he was *not* particularly anxious, except that he thought it would please his wife's uncle, Lord Wentworth, and her father and mother. On the eve of the uncle's funeral he went to Drury Lane Theatre, and, in his private box, with Sir James Mackintosh, clapped till his hands were skinless. His biographer, having before him Lord Byron's journals, has not thought fit to tell more of his daily life, for a month before and a month after the birth of his daughter, than that, in the beginning of the period, he was revelling with Sheridan. The interest, he says, which the details would possess, "now that their first zest as a subject of scandal is gone by," "would be too slight to justify me in entering upon them more particularly." A shallow excuse for such reserve at the very crisis of the poet's life. More likely causes might be found, and, among them, that the journals would have contradicted Mr. Moore's story of the separation.

1816, 15 Jan. vol. vi. p. 277.

1815, 10 Dec. vol. iii. p. 195.

April. p. 167.

17 March. p. 156.

vol. iii. pp. 167, 168.

1815, 31 Oct. p. 187.

4 Nov. pp. 190, 219.

For two months, in his year of married life, Lord Byron met Walter Scott almost daily alone in Murray's drawing-room, as well as in evening society. In one of those interviews, "He quoted, with the bitterest despair, to Scott the strong expression of Shakspeare:—

Lockhart's 'Life of Scott,' 2nd edit. vol. iii. pp. 38 to 40, 87. vol. vii. p. 323.

"The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us."

and added, 'I would to God that I could have your peace of mind, Mr. Scott; I would give all I have, all my fame, everything, to be able to speak on this subject' (that of domestic happiness) 'as you do.'"

vol. iv. p. 221.

That his wife's sorrow in child-birth was aggravated by his unkindness he himself bears witness. He had breathed upon her "the breath of bitter words;" their child was "born in bitterness and nurtured in convulsion," and the bitterness was altogether his own; he never had, or could have, any reproach to make against her, the fault of the cruel separation lay with him alone. Her wretchedness may, in some degree, be imagined if we add his confession, that he had a soul "which not only tormented itself, but everybody else in contact with it;" his intimations, that he chose to go where e'er he had a mind, never dreaming his lady was concerned; and held it a light thing, if a husband found perfection insipid, that he should take one mistress or two; and if we contrast the picture of his love for Mary Chaworth, in 'The Dream,' with the fate which she escaped, as calmly contemplated in 'Childe Harold':—

'Childe Harold,' canto iii. stanza 118.

vol. iii. p. 205.

vol. iv. p. 219.

vol. v. p. 95.

vol. x. pp. 120, 127.

'Don Juan,' canto i. stanzas 18, 19, 34.

p. 123, stanza 26.

vol. vi. p. 277.

"——— to his eye
There was but one beloved face on earth,
And that was shining on him ——

'The Dream,' sec. 2.

"——— she was his life,
The ocean to the river of his thoughts,
Which terminated all ——"

"For he through sin's long labyrinth had run,
Nor made atonement when he did amiss,
Had sigh'd to many, though he loved but one,
And that loved one, alas! could ne'er be his.
Ah, happy she! to 'scape from him whose kiss
Had been pollution unto aught so chaste;
Who soon had left her charms for vulgar bliss,
And spoil'd her goodly lands to gild his waste,
Nor calm domestic peace had ever deign'd to taste."

'Childe Harold,' canto i. stanza 5.

From Lady Byron herself we learn, incidentally, that during the latter part of her stay in London, she saw little of her husband; that, twenty-seven days after the birth of her child, he signified to her, *in writing*, his absolute desire that she should leave London on the earliest day that she could conveniently fix, and that she went accordingly.

And what manner of woman was she to whom the vow to love, honour, and cherish, had been thus kept? Let her husband tell—speaking "in the very dregs of" the "bitter business"—immediately after she had enforced separation, and while, as the consequence of the separation, he was suffering unexampled public shame, was outlawed in the general opinion, an exile without hope, without pride, without alleviation.

vol. xv. pp. 65–67.

"I must set you right in one point, however. The fault was *not*, no, nor even the misfortune, in my 'choice' (unless in *choosing at all*); for I do not believe, and I must say it in the very dregs of all

1816, March 8. vol. iii. p. 204.

this bitter business, that there ever was a better, or even a brighter, a kinder, or a more amiable and agreeable being than Lady B. I never had, nor can have, any reproach to make her while with me. Where there is blame, it belongs to myself, and, if I cannot redeem, I must bear it."

1816, 29 March. vol. x. p. 190.

A little later, in 'A Sketch,' in the midst of a bitter scolding of a Mrs. C., the governess and friend of Lady Byron, he thus paints his wife's character:—

> "Foil'd was Perversion by that youthful mind,
> Which Flattery fool'd not, Baseness could not blind,
> Deceit infect not, near Contagion soil,
> Indulgence weaken, nor Example spoil,
> Nor master'd science tempt her to look down
> On humbler talents with a pitying frown,
> Nor Genius swell, nor Beauty render vain,
> Nor Envy ruffle to retaliate pain,
> Nor Fortune change, Pride raise, nor Passion bow,
> Nor Virtue teach austerity—till now,
> Serenely purest of her sex that live,
> But wanting one sweet weakness—to forgive;
> Too shock'd at faults her soul can never know,
> She deems that all could be like her below:
> Foe to all vice, yet hardly Virtue's friend,
> For Virtue pardons those she would amend."

1819. vol. iv. pp. 213, 219.

In the 'Portraits' of the Countess Albrizzi, she writes of Lord Byron, at Venice: "Speaking of his marriage—a delicate subject, but one still agreeable to him, if it was treated in a friendly voice—he was greatly moved, and said it had been the innocent cause of all his errors and all his griefs. Of his wife he spoke with much respect and affection. He

said she was an illustrious lady, distinguished for the qualities of her heart and understanding, and that all the fault of their cruel separation lay with himself."

As a taunt against his wife, he wrote: "She was governed by what she called fixed rules and principles." vol. xv. p. 117. Note to 'Don Juan,' canto i. stanza 12.

There is a remarkable passage in a letter to Murray, a letter which, joined with one to Moore, and with a sentence of introduction to the former, and a note at the foot of the latter, seems to show the wife's delight in sharing, as a humble minister, in the glory of her husband.

A few weeks after their marriage he sent to Moore, in Lady Byron's handwriting, the verses which begin:— 1815, 2 March. vol. iii. p. 151.

"There's not a joy the world can give, like that it takes away."

Some days before the day on which he expressed his absolute desire that she would leave his house, he sent to Murray a manuscript of 'The Siege of Corinth,' also in the handwriting of his wife, and wrote presently afterwards:—

"I am very glad that the handwriting was a favourable omen of the *morale* of the piece; but you must not trust to that, for my copyist would write out anything I desired in all the ignorance of innocence. I hope, however, in this instance, with no great peril to either." 1816, 3 Jan. p. 222. vol. x. p. 100.

How could Lord Byron so soon grow weary of, and neglect, and breathe bitter words against, a creature so bright and beautiful, so kind, so amiable, so agreeable, of such exquisite purity and truth? It might have been thought that he would find, to borrow words from Mr. Moore, the substantial forms of "those images of ideal good and beauty that surrounded him in his musings," rather in her than in those whom he sought before and after marriage. But he had followed a course of life which hardens the heart and depraves the taste, though seldom so cruelly, and so utterly, as in him; and marriage, if it does not purify the sensualist, does but give a darker hue to his pollution.

vol. iii. p. 126.

Lady Byron was no mate for the man whose thoughts of women were such as these:—

1821, 6 Jan. vol. vi. p. 59.

"Thought of the state of women under the ancient Greeks, convenient enough. Present state a remnant of the barbarism of the chivalry and feudal ages—artificial and unnatural. They ought to mind home, and be well fed and clothed, but not mixed in society. Well educated, too, in religion; but to read neither poetry nor politics—nothing but books of piety and cookery. Music, drawing, dancing; also a little gardening and ploughing, now and then. I have seen them mending the roads in Epirus with good success."

The sort of piety which he contemplated appears in his story of a virago, the reigning

vol. iv. p. 120.

favourite of his harem at Venice: "She was very devout."

Whatever Lady Byron suffered from neglect, weariness, disquiet, disgust, or bitterness, she concealed. Her father and mother were unacquainted with any cause of unhappiness. There was not a murmur abroad that the course of her married life had not run smooth.* vol. vi. p. 278. vol. iii. p. 197.

Her child was born on the 10th of December, 1815. On the 6th of the next month she received, in writing, her husband's absolute desire that she should leave London. She had a strong impression that he was insane—her opinion being derived, in a great measure, from communications made to her by his nearest relatives and his personal attendant, who had more opportunities than she had of observing him during the latter part of her stay in London. It was represented to her that he was in danger of destroying himself. Lord Byron allows that she really did believe him to be mad. Lady Byron's 'Remarks.' vol. vi. p. 277. vol. iii. p. 287.

On the 8th of January, with the concurrence of his family, she consulted Dr. Baillie as a friend. Not having the opportunity of seeing Lord Byron, he could not give a positive opinion; but being informed of his wish that Lady Byron should leave London, he thought her absence desirable, as an

* So says Moore. Lady Anne Barnard writes: "Lady Byron's misery was whispered soon after her marriage, and his ill-usage; but no word transpired, no sign escaped from her." (Lord Lindsay's letter to the *Times* Newspaper, 7th September, 1869.)

experiment. He enjoined that in her letters she should avoid all but light and soothing topics. She
1816. left London on the 15th of January. That day, and the next when she arrived at her father's house, she wrote to her husband in a kind and cheerful tone. She told her parents of the opinion which had been formed of his state of mind, and they assured the relations who were with him in London, that if he would visit them, they would devote their whole care to the alleviation of his malady. On the 17th of January Lady Noel wrote to Lord Byron, inviting him to Kirkby Mallory. Reports which Lady Byron received from the persons in constant intercourse with him, and from his medical attendant, increased doubts, which had already crossed her mind, whether anything like lunacy did, in fact, exist. In this uncertainty she judged it right to tell her father and mother that, if she were to consider the past conduct of Lord Byron as that of a person of sound mind, nothing could induce her to return to him. Until that moment they had been ignorant of the existence of any cause likely to destroy her prospects of happiness; and even now she withheld from them that something which was the necessary cause of separation.

Though she shrunk from wounding the ear of her mother, it is not certain that she was now without counsel. She may have sought it from the guardian of her infancy, the friend of her womanhood, the lady

against whom Byron launched the 'Sketch,' and whom he calls "the genial confidante." However that may be, she prepared a written statement, in which sixteen symptoms were mentioned as evidence, either of insanity, or, if that did not exist, of grounds for a divorce. Lady Noel carried the statement to London, and consulted with Sir Samuel Romilly, Dr. Lushington, and Dr. Baillie. The two latter visited Lord Byron, without informing him of their purpose, and were convinced that he was of sound mind. The lawyers were satisfied, by the statement which Lady Byron had prepared, that she was entitled to a separation, but they thought reconciliation practicable. Dr. Lushington expressed his wish to aid in effecting it, and Lady Noel did not object. On her mother's return to Kirkby Mallory, Lady Byron, being now assured of her husband's sanity, requested her father to write to him and propose a separation. Lord Byron refused.* Lady Byron then informed him that her

vol. iii. p. 214.

vol. xv. p. 124.

1816, 2 Feb. 7 Feb.

* The visit of Dr. Lushington and Dr. Baillie is mentioned in a note to 'Don Juan,' canto i. stanza 27, taken from Lord Byron's journal. The details from the time of his refusal to separate until his consent are from the same stanza, and from the fragment of a story of 'The Adventures of a young Andalusian Nobleman,' begun by Lord Byron at Venice in 1817, in which his wife appears under the title of Donna Josepha. Since this essay was first printed, the 'Quarterly Review' has published a letter dated the 7th of February, to which Lord Byron possibly referred in saying that his wife had represented herself as "an injured and excellent woman" (see the reference in the margin). But he seems rather to point to some reply from her to a letter which she received from him between the

'Quarterly.' Jan. 1870, p. 226. Moore, vol. xv. p. 126. vol. v. p. 234.

father's letter had been written by her authority. He replied by asking her reasons. She answered that it was unnecessary to tell them to him, and added, according to his own lively version (the only authority for this letter is what Mr. Moore calls "an amusing fragment" of a tale written by Lord Byron), that "she was an injured and excellent woman." He then inquired why she had written the two affectionate letters of the 15th and 16th of January, and she answered because she had believed him to be insane. Again he asked, what were her reasons for demanding a separation? and she replied that, if he refused his consent, she would seek for a divorce, and he must receive the answer in a court of law.

Rather more than a fortnight after her mother had first seen Dr. Lushington, he was consulted by Lady Byron, who, accompanied by her father, came up to London for that purpose.* In a letter written at her request, he says that he can rely upon the accuracy of his memory for the following statement:—He was first consulted by Lady Noel.

1830, 31 Jan. Moore, vol. vi. p. 279.

7th and the 11th of February. His letter has not been published, nor any reply. He wrote "in a state of agitation, that did not allow his judgment its due weight." ('Quarterly,' January, 1870, p. 226.)

* She was at Kirkby on the 19th of February; in London, with her father, at Mivart's Hotel, on the 20th. On the 24th, Dr. Lushington's second opinion had been given. She was still in London with her father on the 29th. The separation was formally arranged about the middle of March. ('Quarterly Review,' January, 1870, pp. 231, 232, 227, 233; Moore, vol. iii. p. 202.)

Upon her representation, he thought a reconciliation practicable, and felt most sincerely a wish to aid in effecting it. When Lady Byron came to London, about a fortnight, or perhaps more, after her mother's visit, Dr. Lushington was, for the first time, informed by her of facts utterly unknown, as he had no doubt, to Sir Ralph and Lady Noel. On that information his opinion was entirely changed. He declared that a reconciliation was impossible, and added that, if such an idea should be entertained, he could not, either professionally or otherwise, take any part towards effecting it.

How could any man, more especially how could one who had entertained an earnest desire for reconciliation, now declare that it was morally impossible, and that he would not—that *he could not, professionally or otherwise*—take part in any endeavour to effect it? Above all, how could an advocate of the ecclesiastical court set forth, in such absolute terms, an opinion which, at first sight, appears directly opposed to the doctrine of the fathers of the Church.* In a judgment, prepared and published, though not delivered, by Archbishop Abbot, in a notorious case of divorce, two hundred years earlier, there is a passage which, if it had been written expressly for the case of Lord Byron, could not have seemed more apposite. "If you ask me," said the Arch-

* At Lambeth, 25th September, 1613. 'State Trials,' fol. vol. x. Appendix, p. 27.

bishop, "what would you then have done concerning this couple of noble personages? my answer is, that I would have a reconciliation by all means to be laboured; and although that be difficult to bring about, yet it is the more honour when it is effected. Charity will forgive and forget the highest offences. It is St. Augustine's judgment, *that in the greatest breaches between man and wife, reconciliation is the best; and the worthiest pains that can be bestowed is to bring that about.*"

What, then, was the essential difference, as respects reconciliation, between the two cases? There is but one answer. Dr. Lushington must have assumed the existence of a fact, from which, inevitably, followed the same consequence that Lord Thurlow pointed out to the House of Lords when he prevailed with them to give, what had never been allowed before, the right of marrying again to a woman seeking divorce for the cause of her husband's adultery. As a general rule, the right was given to a man whose wife had committed adultery, because he could not take her again, and was denied to a woman whose husband had been guilty of the same offence, because they might be reconciled. In the particular instance before the House of Lords the husband had been guilty with his wife's sister. The wife could not, without guilt, return to him, and therefore she was permitted to marry again. When Dr. Lushington declares recon-

ciliation to be impossible, and that, if attempted, he could take no part in the attempt, professionally or otherwise, he must be understood to mean that "duty both to God and man" forbade Lady Byron's return to her husband.

It would be worse than useless to speculate upon the precise offence. It was probably known only to themselves, and to those two or three, or perhaps four persons, to whom, seeking protection, it had been divulged by Lady Byron. Her testimony, upon which Dr. Lushington's judgment was given, is confirmed by her conduct and by the conduct of her husband, from beginning to end. No other motive than the resolve to preserve herself from his power could have persuaded her to speak out to her protectors. No other motive would ever have prevailed upon her to make the cause of offence public. While it was known to him, and not to the world, it was probable that he would consent to a separation. But in answering his reiterated request for some lights upon the subject, if, instead of telling him that he already had them, and that they would appear in the proceedings for a divorce, should he think fit to make such proceedings necessary; if, instead of that answer, Dr. Lushington had delivered "any specific charge, in a tangible shape," one of two things would have happened: either Lord Byron would have destroyed him-

vol. v. p. 235.

vol. iii. pp. 201, 339. vol. iv. p. 2.

self* which he did meditate, or he would not have dared to shrink from a trial, and then would have followed the public disclosure which his wife must have dreaded only less than a return to him.

When a separation was first proposed, it is probable that he did not suspect the real cause. Neglect, and bitterness, and adultery, would seem to him the sufficient causes of the proposal. Yet, unhappily, those offences are not unheard of, and as they do not enable a woman to set herself wholly free from the bonds of marriage, it is not often that an offended wife persists in rejecting a husband who desires to return to her. Of the real offence he might think lightly, if at all, not dreaming that it could be known beyond the cover of the roof under which he had shivered his household gods. His wife's letters, of which he gives a gay paraphrase, in the 'Amusing Fragment,' of the one, as telling him that it was unnecessary to give any reasons, and that she was an injured and excellent woman; of the other, as informing him that if he refused separation, the lights that he required would be given to the inquisition; and a vague public rumour of some secret and mysterious cause, which spread into all manner of uncertain accusations of

vol. v. p. 235.

p. 236.

vol. xv. pp. 65, 66.

* "No choice was left his feelings, or his pride,
Save death or Doctors' Commons—so he died."
Vol. xv. p. 128, *Don Juan*, canto i. stanza 36.
Lord Byron had a third choice—separation, which he accepted.

atrocious vice, opened his eyes, and he gave the consent which had been refused.

It may be said that, knowing her to be entitled to the common divorce, he did wisely in consenting to a separation which she could have compelled by law. Conscious of the existence of sufficient causes, why should he make public his secret sins because she capriciously refused to name them? The question would be pertinent in a common case. But against him were thrown out dark hints and vague insinuations. He was accused of every monstrous vice. His name was tainted. He was supposed guilty of every crime, possible or impossible. He felt that if what was whispered and muttered and murmured were true, he was unfit for England. He says he could hardly conceive that the common and every-day occurrence of a separation between husband and wife could in itself produce so great a ferment. No man of the world, conscious of a common offence only, and suffering under such imputations, would have allowed his adversary to keep back any part of the charge. He would have demanded a public trial. It was not because his spirit quailed that Lord Byron gave way. On the contrary, he was invigorated by the persecution, and rose with the rebound—he was agitated, not depressed.

vol. iii. pp. 216, 217.

vol. xv. pp. 66, 67, 126.

vol. xv. p. 68.

vol. v. p. 247.

vol. iii. p. 201, 205, 229, 358.

vol. iv. pp. 109.

vol. v. p. 61.

As long as possible he delayed to sign the deed of separation. He could not easily believe that he,

vol. iii. p. 286.

the darling of the world in which he lived, the idol of a nation—he, whose dominion over the hearts of women was unrivalled—might not lure back the sad votarist.* Why should she not love him as Myrrha loved Sardanapalus? He learned that she was armed against all enchantments. The son of Bacchus and Circe, when his spell proved powerless, could not have been more confounded. Sustained by the hidden strength, in unblenched majesty, the lady passed away from him for ever.

vol. vi. p. 30, and see p. 27.

She sent him a parting letter, which he destroyed. It is known only from being mentioned in one which, more than five years afterwards, he wrote, but did not send to her. It probably contained some pledge of silence on her part. One of two reasons, neither, perhaps, the true one, which he gave her, for having destroyed it, is that he wished to take her word without documents. The usual engagements had been sanctioned by her lawyers, and were in the deed of separation. Her letter contained some voluntary pledge, which is likely to have been a promise that she would not reveal the cause of the separation. He alleged as the other reason for the destruction of her letter that it was written in a style not very agreeable. It is probable she told him that it would be, as it was, the

17 Nov. 1821.

* "It is certainly not very gratifying to my vanity to have been *planté* after so short a union, and within a few weeks after being made a father."—Lady Blessington's *Conversations*, p. 109.

last letter he would receive from her.* In a last letter she would hardly refrain from some entreaties and warnings which could not be agreeable to a proud heart. He would not dare preserve such a letter, which must needs allude to the cause of separation, and be as damning as the last letter of Laura to Zeluco, an intended model for 'Childe Harold.'† vol. vi. p. 27.

Mr. Moore calls Lady Byron's Remarks on his Notices of the life of her husband an "extraordinary paper," and entreats the reader's attention to some extracts from a pamphlet of Lord Byron, *not published until after his death*, which to Mr. Moore's mind were as beautiful as they were convincing. Convincing of *what*, he does not say, but he means they had convinced him that there was no unusual cause for separation, and that Lord Byron had been wronged. His wish must have been father to the conviction. In that *unpublished* pamphlet Lord Byron argues that 'Don Juan' was anonymous, and no one had a right to assume it to be his; and that merely because there appeared in a poem not vol. i. p. xii. Written 15 March, 1820. vol. v. p. 3. vol. xv. p. 57.

* It was said to be the last letter upon the authority of Lord Byron himself; but she wrote a letter to him, on the 10th of March, 1820, in reply to an offer to shew his Memoirs to her. (See *post*, p. 91.)

† Addition to Preface to 1st and 2nd cantos of 'Childe Harold,' vol. viii. p. 7:—"Had I proceeded with the poem, this character would have deepened as he drew to the close; for the outline which I once meant to fill up for him was, with some exceptions, the sketch of a modern Timon, perhaps a poetical Zeluco."

ascertained to be his production, "A disagreeable, casuistical, and by no means respectable female pedant," no one had a right to suppose that he meant his wife; for his part, he saw no resemblance; he never would introduce the likenesses of the living members of his own family into his pictures unless their features could be made favourable to themselves; which, in the above instance, would be extremely difficult. With the same disregard of truth, he added that he could not justify his own behaviour in the affair of the separation because he never had—and he called the Almighty to witness that his whole desire had ever been to obtain it—"any specific charge in a tangible shape." He was involved in difficulties with his wife and her relatives, no one knew why, because the persons complaining refused to state their grievances; the public was excited against him without an accusation. After expressing a hope that he might never have the opportunity of taking vengeance, he concludes, "I do not in this allude to the party who might be right or wrong, but to many who made her cause the pretext of their own bitterness. She, indeed, must have long avenged me in her own feelings; for whatever her reasons may have been (and she never adduced them to me, at least), she probably neither contemplated nor conceived to what she became the means of conducting the father of her child and the husband of her choice."

In all this, and it is all that is offered in vindication or retaliation, or whatever it should be called, Lord Byron does *not*, in direct words, assert that he did not *know* his wife's reasons for the separation. His complaint is that he had never obtained "any "specific charge in a tangible shape." He knew that no such charge, in such a shape, would or could be given, unless all other means of separation failed. He had the right and the power to compel Lady Byron to give what he complains that he never received. Instead of exercising the power, he surrendered the right. There are charges, says the 'Quarterly' reviewer, so damning that they compel inquiry: he should have added—or separation.

'Quarterly Review,' October, 1869, p. 443.

If he had published the vindication, it might have been said, that although the challenge came too late, he had dared his wife to make a specific charge. But he suppressed the pamphlet, and through the course of eight years, to the end of his life, neither to the public nor in his private letters did he profess to be ignorant of the charge against him. In conversation, indeed, in which he spoke freely of his marriage, he always declared that he was wholly ignorant of what really led to the separation, as Lady Byron would never assign her motives, and refused to answer his letters. This he said to the Countess of Blessington among others, and, to her, a year before his death. He used to be

8 May, 1820. 25 Dec. 1820. Moore, vol. iv. p. 308. vol. v. p. 3.

1823, May. vol. vi. pp. 27, 28.

the first to introduce the subject, and it could hardly fail to happen that he would be asked — what was the cause? If, as he professed, he was ignorant of any secret cause, the ready answer was that he had been unfaithful and negligent, and his wife was unforgiving. But the true cause was always present to his mind, and, if it were of the class to which Dr. Lushington's opinion points, his consciousness would prompt the answer that he gave. It is plain that if he were ignorant, he was wilfully ignorant. Instead of extorting the charge, he suffered the separation to be extorted. Instead of standing fast to defy the ghastly rumours that arose against him, he fled, leaving them to die away. After that time—after the time when he sought until he found a clew in the very refusal to answer, and instead of following it, stopped short—after that time he never inquired, and, while he complained that he was kept in ignorance, avoided inquiry. At the date of his conversation with Lady Blessington, he gave her a letter which, more than a year before, he had written but had not sent, to Lady Byron. In that letter he assured his wife that he, *now*, bore her no resentment, that if she had injured him, his forgiveness was something—if he had injured her, it was more, because the most offending are the least forgiving; and, that whether the offence had been solely on his side, or mutual, or on hers chiefly, he had ceased to reflect upon any but two things, that she was the mother

1821, 17 Nov. vol. vi. p. 30.

of his child, and that they should never meet again. This was written more than a year after the unpublished pamphlet in which he had so bitterly complained that through his wife's mysterious silence he had become the object of general obloquy, and more than a year before he declared to Lady Blessington that, to that moment, he was wholly ignorant of the real cause. There is not in the letter to his wife, a hint that he did not know, or that he desired to know. If he had not been fully informed, he would surely have called upon her justice and upon her love for the daughter—whose father's fame was part of her inheritance—not to leave him a prey to the atrocities of public rumour, but, to say, in a word, that the accusations were false, and that there were no other than the common causes of divorce. He shrunk from the appeal, and on the whole, it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that the cause had never been explained to him—that he knew the cause—and did not dare to ask for explanation.

vol. xv. pp. 65-68.

vol. vi. p. 88.

There are signs that he lived, always, under the fear of disclosure. The intense hatred which, whenever and wherever it could be safely indulged, broke forth in sneer or curse against his "assassins," will hardly allow charity to attribute his forbearance, when indulgence might have been dangerous, to a better motive than fear. So soon as he had agreed to separate, and while Lady Byron's lawyers

vol. xv. p. 119.

1816, 29 Feb.

vol. v. p. 201. recommended a divorce, he wrote to Moore, asking him not to believe all he heard, and entreating that vol. xv. p. 127. no attempt might be made to defend him, as that would be a mortal offence; and, because it had been represented that he endeavoured to excuse himself by speaking of his wife with disrespect, he called 1816, 25 March. vol. iii. p. 217. upon Rogers, as one of the few persons with whom he had lived in intimacy, to bear witness of his having declared that where there was a right or a 1820, 31 Aug. vol. iv. p. 335. wrong, she had the right. In one of his letters, written long after the separation, he mentions her as a "good daughter," and it is remarkable that, notwithstanding his abhorrence of his mother-in-law and the coarse style of his private letters when Sir 1819, vol. iv. p. 219. Ralph and Lady Noel are mentioned, not a word of anger or ridicule, against them is to be found in anything that he gave to the world. There is no allusion to either in the 'Sketch,' or in 'Don Juan.' He had, probably, perceived, what the event proved, that it would not be vol. iii. pp. 212, 287. safe to insult them openly. He was forward to converse on the subject of his marriage, and vol. iv. pp. 219, 221. vol. vi. pp. 27, 114. eager to learn what the world said of the cause of separation. Notwithstanding her absolute silence, his fears imputed to Lady Byron a feeling vol. x. p. 183. of fixed hostility which would not rest at his grave, but would make some discovery injurious Oct. 1819. vol. iv. p. 222. to his memory. In one of their few intervals of seriousness at Venice, he besought Moore not to

suffer unmerited censure to rest upon his name after death.*

There were four persons whom he especially hated, attributing his wife's conduct to their counsel—Mrs. C——, Lady Noel, Dr. Lushington, and Sir Samuel Romilly. He measured out his anger among them with some caution. It may be that they were feared as depositaries of the secret. Mrs. C—— was chastised in the 'Sketch' with a bitter scolding, allayed by praise of her pupil, perhaps over-wrought. Not a word was publicly uttered against Lady Noel, though, in private letters, she was a frequent object of sarcasm and malediction. The "good daughter" was her shield against open assault. It might have been expected that Dr. Lushington would be the most hateful of all. He was supposed to have accompanied Dr. Baillie in order to find out tokens of

vol. iii. p. 202. vol. iv. pp. 2, 136, 219, 220. vol. v. p. 87. vol. xv. p. 124.

* It would be unjust to attribute to fear his assurance to Lady Blessington that whether Lady Byron survived him, or not, he would not interfere with her plans for their daughter. He had been told that, being in ill-health, she lived in constant alarm lest he should interpose his paternal authority. He might have desired to quiet her, lest the apprehension should urge her to claim for their daughter the protection of a court of law. But, although, long before, in mentioning that, for some time past, he had not heard of his daughter, he added, that he looked forward to a day of reckoning; and, although at the very time he heard of his wife's fears, he was writing of her as his moral Clytemnestra, it is not likely that he would have suffered Lady Blessington to conclude, either that he meant to interfere, or wilfully to leave his wife in doubt and dread. There might have been a better motive still, and there is no ground for assuming a lower.—(1823, May, vol. vi. pp. 26, 27; 1819, June, vol. iv. p. 164.)

insanity,* and, as an advocate of the Ecclesiastical Court, it was more especially his duty to consider the causes for separation, yet he went scathless. Neither in anything published, nor in private letters, is his name mentioned. He survived Lord Byron, and perhaps was not of a temper to bear reproach in silence. Sir Samuel Romilly was spared while he lived. He died, and the unleavened fury of the poet's heart arose over his fallen foe; a man, so lofty and so stainless, that he seemed rather the image of some ancient virtue than anything in these times--so stern against wrong, so pitiful to misery, so wise and good in counsel, so lovely and pleasant in his household. When that noble mind was overthrown by the death of her who was part of his life, *he* must have been far gone in ire and envy who would not curb those malignant passions, in view of a scene of such perfect happiness so awfully closed.†

1818, 2 Nov. vol. xv. pp. 69, 118, 119. vol. iv. p. 164. 1819, 7 June.

Lord Byron left England soon after the separation, and before his departure wrote 'The Farewell.' Moore says that he wrote it in the swell of tender recollections, his tears falling fast over the paper. They were tears of the imagination, no more worth

25 April, 1816. vol. iii. p. 238. 17 March, 1816. vol. iii. p. 230.

* It is said that Dr. Lushington was not the lawyer who accompanied Dr. Baillie. ('Blackwood,' January, 1870, p. 131, note.) The Reviewer adds that Dr. Lushington's own letter proves that he was not the person. Certainly it does not.

† In a second edition, Mr. Moore omitted what he calls the "morbid" attack on Sir Samuel Romilly. His words seem to imply that in the omission he was paying a civility to the shade of Romilly rather than wiping away a stain from Byron.

sympathy than Sophy Streatfield's tears at will. When he passionately desired that his heart were bared before his wife, so that she might see every inward thought; when he mourned because every morning would wake him to a widowed bed; assured her that wherever she went, all his hopes went with her; and protested that he was seared in heart, and love, and blighted—was there a word of truth in it all? The fit comment is, that ten months after the separation—ten months after the verses were written, and nine months after they were printed—a child, his daughter Allegra, was born to the poet by an English lady.*

vol. x. p. 185.

vol. iv. pp. 133, 134. vol. v. p. 335.

Leaving England, he went through Flanders, and by the Rhine to Switzerland. Within three months, he wrote the third canto of 'Childe Harold.' With the events of the past year fresh in his memory, and the separation immediately present to him, he

1816, April to June. vol. iii. pp. 243-247. vol. viii. pp. VII. to VIII.

* Perhaps the anonymous author of 'Don Juan' had a vague memory of 'The Farewell' floating over him, when he thus treated the reverend name of poet:—

"———— feeling in a poet is the source
Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,
And take all colours, like the hands of dyers.
Canto iii. stanza 87.

Moore afterwards declared that his purpose had been to show that Lord Byron's pretended affection was not genuine. He says in his journal, that he had expended many pages of his life of Byron in the endeavour to bring out, clearly, "the great difference there is between that sort of sensibility which is lighted up in the head and imagination of men of genius, and the genuine, natural sensibility whose seat is in the heart."—Lord Russell's *Life of Moore*, vol. vi. p. 310.

Canto iii. stanzas 9-15, 16, 73.

imputed no blame to his wife. In his own grand and melancholy tone, he tells that he had filled the cup of life a second time, from a purer fount, and on holier ground, but in vain; that in the dwellings of men he had become restless, and worn, and stern, and wearisome; that he was self-exiled, and that he looked upon the peopled desert from which he had fled as a place of agony and strife where, for some sin, he had been cast to sorrow. In stanza 117, he fears that his daughter may be taught to hate him as a duty, and at the close of the poem are a few words which may have been pointed against Lady Byron—those in which he speaks of virtues which "weave snares for the failing;" but they would not have seemed to refer to her, if he had not afterwards repeatedly given her the name of Clytemnestra.

Stanza 114.

At this point may be noted two things not to be forgotten as the narrative proceeds. First—After Lady Byron had forced her husband, sorely against his will, to consent to a separation which blighted his name and outlawed him, he acknowledged her to be bright and beautiful, and amiable, pure, and true, and especially with regard to the separation, blameless. Whatever blame there was, belonged to him, and he must bear it. Second—From the time of this acknowledgment she never offended in word or deed. The most subtle malice, searching through the years since they parted, could find no other cause of reproach than that she had set up a Sunday

school, and had consented to be the patroness of a charity ball at Hinckley. For these offences, her husband, then living in the state which will presently be seen, scourged her as a Pharisee, in verses which, to the eyes of his biographer, were "full of strong and indignant feeling." Nothing can be more firmly established than this: from beginning to end she was faultless.

vol. xii. p. 30.
vol. xv. p. 206.
vol. v. p. 260.

But she refused an offer of reconciliation made through the mediation of Madame de Staël, saying that Lord Byron well knew they could never live together again. She could not—she dared not—listen to it. "She was governed by fixed rules and principles," and had learned that it might not be. He was angry, and would not be angry with himself. As he had called upon his imagination for the tenderness of 'The Farewell,' so he now invoked the same power to pourtray his wife as cold, treacherous, and deceitful. Next, he plunged into vicious pleasure, until his understanding was darkened, and it seems as though he had really brought himself to believe that his noble wife was such an one as the poor inmates of his sordid harem at Venice; that the offence for which she had parted from him for ever was little more rank in her estimation than in his, and that she had used it as a pretext to secure her own independence, and to avenge herself for his neglect, bitterness, disgust, and adultery. It was in the very dregs of his defilement, and a year after

1816, July.
vol. iii. pp. 286, 287.
Lord Russell's 'Life of Moore,' vol. viii. p. 222.

the separation, that he began to write of her in his private letters, with epithets which Mr. Moore, who does not lean over much to the side of decorum, was afraid to print.

1816, Sept. vol. x. p. 207.

Upon the failure of Madame de Staël's negotiation he wrote, but never published, 'Lines on hearing that Lady Byron was ill.' In these verses, which may deserve careful regard, stringing one extravagance upon another, he cursed his wife, and declared that with cold treason, and to gratify her thirst for gold, she had murdered his fame, peace, and hope—had entered into crooked ways, had been guilty of deceit, incompatible averments and equivocations, and had acquiesced in all things that tended to her desired end. He denounced her as—

"The moral Clytemnestra of thy Lord."

1817, 10 March. vol. iii. p. 358.

This verse was not a passing burst of anger. The thought abode with him. Within a few months he wrote to Moore, "since my moral * * clove down my fame;" three years afterwards to Murray, of his daughter Ada, as the "little Electra of Mycenæ;"

1819, 7 June, vol. iv. p. 164.

1823, 6 April. vol. vi. p. 22.

and still later, in a letter to Lord Blessington, after saying that Dr. Parr had been the Greek teacher of his "moral Clytemnestra," he added, "I say *moral*, because it is true, and is so useful to the virtuous, that it enables them to do anything without the aid of an Ægisthus." Seeing that there was no Ægisthus, and that Lord Byron had not returned to his Argos

to meet his fate, but had sent away his wife who refused to return to him, what point of resemblance could have taken such hold of his imagination? Knowing her purity and truth, and "the ignorance of her innocence," did he strive to persuade himself that she had spread a net for him in the nuptial chamber, and when he fell into the snare, destroyed him?

The 'Lines on hearing that Lady Byron was ill,' conclude:

"And thus upon the world—trust in thy truth, vol. x. p. 208.
And the wild fame of my ungovern'd youth—
On things that were not, and on things that are—
Even upon such a basis hast thou built
A monument, whose cement hath been guilt!
The moral Clytemnestra of thy Lord,
And hew'd down with an unsuspected sword,
Fame, peace, and hope—and all the better life
Which, but for this cold treason of thy heart,
Might still have risen from out the grave of strife,
And found a nobler duty than to part.
But of thy virtues did'st thou make a vice,
Trafficking with them in a purpose cold,
For present anger, and for future gold—
And buying other's grief at any price.
And thus once entered into crooked ways,
The early truth, which was thy proper praise,
Did not still walk beside thee—but at times,
And with a breast unknowing its own crimes,
Deceit, averments incompatible,
Equivocations, and the thoughts which dwell
In Janus spirits—the significant eye
Which learns to lie with silence—the pretext
Of Prudence, with advantages annex'd—
The Acquiescence in all things which tend,
No matter how, to the desired end—
All found a place in thy philosophy.

The means were worthy, and the end is won—
I would not do by thee as thou hast done." *

1816, October. vol. iii. pp. 297 to 308.

From Switzerland he went into Italy, passing through Milan and Verona to Venice. He had tarnished his fame, and raised an immovable barrier against the return to domestic life. He now gave himself up, unbridled, to the lusts which had brought that ruin upon him. When he afterwards meditated the gloomy sequestration of the old age of Tiberius, as the subject of a tragedy, he thought that he could

1821, January. vol. v. p. 89.

extract something of "my tragic, at least," even out of the sojourn at Capræa, by softening the *details*, and exhibiting the despair which must have led to those very vicious pleasures. "For none," he adds, "but a powerful and gloomy mind overthrown would have had recourse to such solitary horrors." On

1816, Nov. vol. iv. pp. 106, 108, 118.

his arrival at Venice he began to live in adultery with the wife of his landlord, a linendraper. He grew weary of her within a year, and moved to the Mocenigo Palace on the Grand Canal. Not that he was constant for a year. He had passed but two months under her husband's roof when she found him

1817, January, pp. 339 to 342.

entertaining her sister-in-law, also married, upon whom, in his presence, she bestowed sixteen such slaps, that it made the ear ache only to hear the echo.

* Mr. Moore says that this poem was written "*in a spirit not quite so generous*" as the spirit in which Lord Byron, hearing that his wife was ill, flung into the fire a prose satire against her, upon which he was engaged.—Vol. iii. p. 289.

A few months later, he took two peasant girls, one married, the other single, who had cried to him for food. After his removal from the linendraper's house, he received into his palace a company of poor women as "the companions of his disengaged hours." "The most distinguished and at last the reigning favourite of the unworthy harem," the wife of a small village baker, was the terror of men, women, and children, for she had the strength of an Amazon, and used to knock down the other poor women of the palace. Being, at last, turned away, she threatened her master with the knife, and flung herself into the canal, from which she was rescued. Lord Byron writes of her, "I like this kind of animal, and am sure that I should have preferred Medea to any woman that ever breathed." Indeed, after he had well fed and clothed her, this reigning favourite was the very model woman of his imagination. With strength to plough and mend roads, "she was very devout," and in the midst of her adultery, "would cross herself if she heard the prayer time strike." He continued in this way of life for about fourteen months, from the time of his first arrival at Venice, and stopped when it had brought him nigh death's door. In the same month in which he announced what he called his reformation, he met the lady with whom he lived in adultery until he sailed for Greece.

1817, Summer. vol. iv. pp. 113, 114.

1818, p. 108 to 121.

1818, Sept. 19. vol. iv. p. 136.

vol. iv. p. 120.

Until the beginning of 1819.

vol. iv. p. 143.

1819, April. vol. iv. p. 144.

1823, 15 July.

The fourth canto of 'Childe Harold' was written at Venice, begun in June, 1817, and dedicated on

vol. viii. pp. viii. and 189.

vol. viii. pp. 246 to 248.

the 2nd January, 1818. Certainly he had not been wronged by his wife since March, 1816. But he had brought himself to imagine that he had suffered

Canto iv. stanzas 130 to 137.

mighty wrongs; and the great actor, lifting up hands, eyes, and heart, to Time the avenger, and to Nemesis, called upon them to awake, and exact the vengeance which should yet be sought and found. Rapt into prophetic vision, he foretold that an hour to come should pile a mountain of curse upon his enemies—the curse of forgiveness. He called heaven and earth to witness that he had suffered things to be forgiven; that his brain had been seared, heart riven, name blighted, life's life lied away, and that he had only not been driven to despair because he was not altogether of the clay which rotted into the souls of those upon whom he looked down. He wove into his execration some bitter phrases from the suppressed Lines of September, 1816, and ended by a mysterious threat that though his frame should perish, something unearthly, of which the objects of his vengeance did not deem, would sink into their spirits and move their rocky hearts to love.

To the world *for* whom it was written this imprecation may have seemed sublime. The persons *against* whom it was written must have judged that it had been carried one step beyond the sublime. There was no more truth in it than in the tenderness of the 'Farewell' to his wife, composed ten months before the birth of the little Allegra.

It was, to use the words of his biographer, during the daring career of this coarse libertine at Venice, that the first and second cantos of 'Don Juan' were written. Of Lady Byron's portrait in the first canto it will be enough to copy the minature which he presented in the unpublished pamphlet—"A disagreeable, casuistical, and by no means respectable female pedant." vol. iv. p. 112. vol. vi. p. 37.

At the same time and place he began in his private letters to write of his wife in language over which Mr. Moore has delicately cast a veil. The first instances are, "I suppose now I shall never be able to shake off my sables in public imagination, more particularly since my moral * * clove down my fame." This was written while Signora Marianna (the linendraper's wife) was seated at his elbow. Fifteen days afterwards, "It is only the virtuous like * * * * who can afford to give up husband and child and live happy ever after." Marianna was again by his side as he wrote, and told him that his fine reflections were only good to clean shoes withal. 1817, 10 March. vol. iii. p. 358. 1817, 25 March, p. 363.

Now, too, first of all, he discovered that when he was standing alone upon his hearth, with his household gods shivered around him, deliberate desolation had been piled upon him by his wife and her confederates. Having written himself into a rage, he protested to Moore that he would never forget or forgive—that his desire of revenge had comparatively swallowed up in him every other feeling, and he was 1818, Sept. 19. vol. iv. pp. 134, 136.

only a spectator upon earth till a tenfold opportunity offered. It might come yet. There were others more to be blamed than * * * * and on them his eyes were fixed incessantly. In the same letter he says that he had finished the first canto of 'Don Juan,' and describes the reigning favourite of his palace as the kind of animal he liked, tall and energetic as a Pythoness, a woman who, if he put a poniard into her hand, would plunge it where he told her, and into *him* if he offended.

It was a great change within little more than two years. Having acknowledged the perfection of his wife's character, having confessed that he never had or could have any reproach to make her, that there was blame, and it belonged wholly to him, and if he could not redeem he must bear it,—he now accused her as the cold assassin of his fame, peace, hope, and better life, and called heaven and earth to bear witness to his undying hate. A great change for better or for worse was sure. He must needs submit, or revolt more and more. It may well be believed that in her parting letter, like his own Francesca, Lady Byron had conjured him, before the cloud passed away, to wring out the black drop, so that they might be re-united to-morrow since it could not be to-day.

> "But his heart was swoll'n and turned aside,
> By deep interminable pride,
> He, sue for mercy!"

His moral life was palsied. Insensible to the life-long desolation which she was suffering, he would fain have persuaded himself that she, too, regarded his offence as a light matter, that she had dealt treacherously, using it as a pretext, and was the author of all the evil that had ensued.

His progress from praise to invective may be thus traced:—

After his wife had compelled him to consent to a separation, and while the separation was incomplete, and the lawyers were recommending divorce, in the very dregs of the bitter business, he represented her to be perfect, and entreated that nothing might be said from which it could be inferred that he imputed the least blame to her. The blame was his, and he must bear it. 1816, February and March.

When the separation was complete, and she had given him, in a parting letter, some pledge, probably a pledge of silence, and while the public voice against him was fierce and unanimous, and he was accused of every crime that could be committed, he suffered two poems to be published in which he attributed to his wife every virtue under heaven, above all, truth and serene purity, and mourned only that she wanted the one sweet weakness to forgive. He did not pretend to be ignorant of the cause of offence. 1816, April.

After he had, unwillingly, made an offer of reconciliation, which was rejected, he wrote, but kept 1816, Sept.

secret during his lifetime, verses in which he invoked a curse upon her—

"A hollow agony which will not heal."

And denounced her as a moral Clytemnestra, who, with an unsuspected sword, and in the cold treason of her heart, had hewed down his fame, peace, and hope, for anger and for gold—had departed from her early truth—and had entered into crooked ways, walking in deceit and equivocation, and had learned to lie with silence, and had acquiesced in everything which tended to her purpose. Yet still he did not pretend to be ignorant of the cause of offence.

1818. There was now less reason to fear disclosure. The vague rumour of mysterious crime had died away. The cry, so loud and so universal in March, 1816, was hushed. The 'Farewell,' and the opening and the closing verses of 'Childe Harold' had found favour. His popularity was returning. Walter Scott and Jeffrey, the 'Edinburgh' and the 'Quarterly,' defended him. He had lost all hope and desire of reconciliation, and was drinking deeply of the cup that imbrutes the soul, and cheats the eye with false presentments. Now he began to complain publicly of injustice, perfidy, and lies—that his name had been blighted, his life's life lied away. The anger suppressed in 1816 was poured forth in satire and execration. Yet still he did not pretend to be ignorant of the cause of offence; and while he

complained of the hand that gave the wound, acknowledged that, though unnatural, the retribution was just.

Upon the publication of the first and second cantos of 'Don Juan' the public voice was again raised against him, though it was not so general nor so fierce, nor accompanied by mysterious hints, as in 1816. In answer to an article that appeared in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' in August, 1819, he wrote a pamphlet, in which he declared, for the first time, that he had never been able to obtain any specific charge against him in a tangible shape, and he called God to witness it had ever been his whole desire to obtain it. *But he commanded Murray not to publish the pamphlet.* From that time forward to the end of his life, he never affirmed either his ignorance or his desire to be enlightened, so as to bring his affirmation to the knowledge of his wife;* and notwithstanding the intense hatred towards Lady Noel which breaks out over and over again in his private correspondence, yet neither of the poems by which he scourged Lady Byron breathed a syllable against her mother.

1820. vol. xv. p. 16. 1820, 15 March. vol. xv. p. 65.

Perhaps Lady Byron did not hit the true inter-

* Under a mistaken notion that John Wilson, the editor of 'Blackwood,' was the author of the offending article, Lord Byron wrote to Murray (10th December, 1819): "When he talks of Lady Byron's business, he talks of what he knows nothing about; and you may tell him that no one can more desire a public investigation of that affair than I do."—Vol. iv., p. 269.

pretation of a blank in one of the passages of a private letter in which her father and mother are mentioned. "Her nearest relatives are a * * * *" The asterisks are followed by the words:—"My circumstance have been and are in a state of great confusion;" and lower down, "I still, however, think that if I had had a fair chance, by being placed in even a tolerable situation, I might have gone on fairly." The blank was no doubt filled up by offensive words. Lady Byron says that it clearly implies "something too offensive for publication." Was not the "something" an accusation of niggardliness because the parents had not supplied the wants of their daughter and her husband? There would have been nothing unreasonable or dishonourable in Lord Byron's expectation that they would do so, the rather because by the death of her brother, Lord Wentworth, about a year before, Lady Noel had inherited an estate worth 7000*l.* a year.* It was given to Lady Noel for life, afterwards to Lady Byron for life, and last of all to her children, and by law, when it came to Lady Byron, her husband had a right to the income. It is improbable that at the time of the separation this estate should have been overlooked; yet it was not secured to Lady Byron. Perhaps, content to be set free, she did not care to

1816, 8 March. vol. iii. p. 205.

* The 'Quarterly Review' informs us that Sir Ralph Noel was, at this time, in difficulty and in danger for want of money.—*Quarterly*, January, 1870, p. 224.

bargain for her rents. However, Lord Byron resolved that he would not touch any part of her fortune, a sacrifice which his biographer thinks "delicate and manly." But though he had the manliness and delicacy to make the resolution, "he wanted the fortitude to keep it." When Lady Noel died he appointed Sir Francis Burdett his arbitrator to determine what "*allowance*" should be made to Lady Byron out of the estate derived from her uncle. Colonel Stanhope praises Lord Byron's generosity in devoting his large income to the cause of Greece. It would be pleasant to know how much of his glory was bought with his wife's money.

vol. iii. p. 287. 1822, Feb. vol. v. p. 306-309. vol. vi. p. 135.

In parting with Lord Byron, it is some relief to cast a glimpse of light upon a very dark picture. Though he continued to breathe bitter words against Lady Noel down to the time of her death, yet, for three years before his own death, he seems to have ceased (a single instance excepted) to write or speak unkindly of his wife. The first four and the eighth stanzas of his last beautiful verses suggest that the unholy bands which had held him were loosed. In the record of the last ten days of his life the lady from whom he had parted at Genoa is not named, and, while he was there, he confessed that *he* was not happy, and that *she* had little reason to be satisfied with her lot. Among his misfortunes, in the year 1820, he reckoned that "the Countess T. G. nata G^a. G^i. in despite of all I said and did to prevent it,

After 26 Jan. 1821. vol. v. p. 87. vol. vi. p. 137. vol. xiv. p. 358. 1823. Lady Blessington 'Conversations,' pp. 69, 70. Moore, vol. v. p. 85.

would separate from her husband, Il Cavalier Commendatore G[i]. &c., &c., &c., and all on the account of 'P. P. clerk of this parish.'" In the intervals of consciousness his thoughts turned to her whom he had wronged. He had sometimes hoped to establish an amicable understanding or correspondence with her, and to see his daughter. He had often looked with a yearning heart towards England, longing to forgive and be forgiven by his wife, and to embrace his child, and had been held back, as he said, only, by the fear that his enemies would awake with renewed energy to assail and blacken him; that she, preserving her consistency, would refuse to be reconciled, and that he should be driven out again, and with even greater ignominy than on the separation. On the day that he sailed from Genoa towards Greece he regretted that he had not first gone to England. On the day before his death, he muttered, "Why did I not go home before I came here?" On the same day, when he knew that he was dying, he was most anxious to make Fletcher, his old servant, understand his last wishes. The servant asked whether he should bring pen and paper to take down his words. "Oh, no," he said, "it is now nearly over. Go to my sister—tell her. Go to Lady Byron; you will see her, and say ——" His voice faltered, and he continued to mutter to himself for nearly twenty minutes with much earnestness, concluding, "Now

Lady Blessington, pp. 400 to 403.

1824, 9th to 19th April, vol. vi., pp. 200-212.

15 July 1823, p. 64.

18 April, 1824. p. 211.

p. 210.

I have told you all." "My Lord," said Fletcher, "I have not understood a word you have been saying." "Not understood me?" said Byron, with a look of the utmost distress, "What a pity! Then it is too late; all is over." "I hope not," answered Fletcher; "but the Lord's will be done." "Yes, not mine," he said, and tried to utter a few words, of which all were inarticulate except "my sister—my child."

He was most unhappy in his choice of a biographer. Mr. Moore was unable to perceive the injury that he inflicted upon Lord Byron in giving a fixed habitation to his changing fancies of anger, and remorse without repentance, or the danger which, in in the very whirlwind of his passion, he had always avoided, of enforcing Lady Byron to break silence. If Sir Walter Scott;* who was emphatically *a man*, could have undertaken the task, *he* would not have called up his friend to tell from the grave, with a joyous voice, the foul sensuality of Venice; *he* would not have collected darts, which lay scattered abroad and harmless, to pierce a woman's heart. Such were not the messages which the husband, if God had

vol. vi. p. 265.

* "Deeply he condemned and pitied the conduct and fate of those who, gifted with pre-eminent talents for the instruction and entertainment of their species at large, fancy themselves entitled to neglect those every-day duties and charities of life, from the mere shadowing of which in imaginary pictures the genius of poetry and romance has always reaped its highest and purest, perhaps its only true and immortal honours."—Written of Walter Scott, *Lockhart's Life*, vol. viii., pp. 27, 28.

given him utterance, would have sent from his death bed. It is difficult to believe that Moore had not personal resentment against Lady Byron, and as difficult to understand how the utmost degree of resentment could persuade any man to insult any woman so daringly.

Moore, vol. iii. p. 2.

Thomas Moore was one of the three to whom Lord Byron gave the name of friend. Hobhouse, afterwards Lord Broughton, whom he justly called his best friend, was his counsellor and agent in the serious affairs of life. For his schoolfellow Lord Clare, whom after the year 1813 he saw for five minutes only on the public road between Imola and Bologna, he had an imaginative affection which he rated far above his esteem for Hobhouse. Moore occupied the middle place between the two. He was gentle, and the most pleasing of companions,* with more perfect sympathy than the others in the passion and the rhymes upon which Lord Byron spent his youth and early manhood. He was the bosom friend, from whom, before marriage, Byron had but one secret, and that was to be told when they were veterans; who was chosen to defend his memory after death; and, to whom he gave the memoirs of his life, with power to suppress what might be unwelcome to the public. When Lord

vol. i. pp. 63, 65, 69, 99.
vol. v. pp. 277-8.
vol. vi. pp. 8-9.
vol. ii. p. 268.
Lord Russell's 'Life of Moore,' vol. vi. p. 29.

* "There is a manly frankness, with perfect ease and good breeding, about him which is delightful." "It would be a delightful addition to life if T. M. had a cottage within two miles of one."—Walter Scott in *Lockhart's Life*, vol. viii., pp. 115, 116.

Byron heard of the trouble which had befallen Moore through the dishonesty of his deputy at Bermuda, his first thought was one of regret that the state of his own affairs prevented him from being of use to his friend. Within two months afterwards, he gave him the 'Memoirs,' which, through his influence, Moore sold to Murray for two thousand guineas. Yet, in a letter, in which Byron writes of degrees of amity, and in which Hobhouse is not named, he barely distinguishes Moore by a "perhaps," from the thousand friends, as they are called, partners in the world's waltz, pleasant for the time, but not much remembered when the ball is over. If he meted out his own friendship by an assumed measure of his friend's, he had guessed shrewdly. After the gift of the 'Memoirs,' there are signs of estrangement on both sides. In his journal Moore rebukes Byron's bad taste in alluding to a tale of the early life of Bowles, —is amused to see through his design in depreciating himself together with all the poets of the day— sure of his own fame, he would not have them for partners—repeats a fear of Jeffrey, that Byron had but few of the social sympathies in his heart—and observes that his later letters were not at all as lively as formerly, and Douglas Kinnaird had noticed that the vivacity of his correspondence was very much decreased. In his last letter to Lord Byron he complains of a long silence, desires to know if he is to be cut dead, and laments that his friend should

1819, 12 August. Moore, vol. iv. p. 184.

October, p. 242.

vol. vi. pp. 8, 9.

1821, April 13. Lord Russell, vol. iii. p. 222.

May 3. p. 227-8.

1822, April 29. p. 348.

1823, February, March. Lord Russell, vol. iv. p. 45.

pp. 153, 162.

Moore, vol. vi. p. 169.

Lord Russell, vol. v. p. 238.

1824, March 4. Moore, vol. vi. pp. 169, 170.

1824. May 3, 14, 15, 18; July 1 to 9, 12 to 15. Lord Russell, vol. iv. pp. 182, 186, 189, 193, 211 to 217.

be loitering in Cephalonia to finish 'Don Juan,' instead of pursuing heroic and warlike adventures. Lord Byron was greatly incensed by this letter; and, after various threats, said to Count Gamba that he would write a satire against Moore,—to whom he replied that he had been much occupied with business, had not continued 'Don Juan' or any other poem, and that so soon as the proper moment arrived he had come to Missolonghi. In this, the last letter that he wrote to Moore, he said: "On the 15th (or 16th) of February I had an attack of apoplexy, or epilepsy—the physicians have not exactly decided which, but the alternative is agreeable." "I am supposed to be getting better, slowly, however." The letter was received on the 3rd of May, and on the same day was thus noticed in Moore's journal:—"The 'Westminster Review,' too, has an article about me, written, I rather think, by——; quantum suff. of praise, but so managed on the whole as to be disparaging. Had a cold dinner at the inn; and left Bath at six o'clock. A letter from Lord Byron at Missolonghi, has had an attack of epilepsy or apoplexy; 'the physicians' he says 'do not know which; but the alternative is agreeable.'" While he was writing these words Lord Byron had been, already, dead fourteen days. He heard the tidings without suffering the day's grief which Swift allotted to Arbuthnot, without even paying the tribute of the "shrug," and "I'm sorry" which the dean ex-

pected from "the rest." Alexander Selkirk's beasts would not have looked upon *his* death with more shocking indifference. After the day when he read of the apoplexy or epilepsy, and of the slow recovery, *supposed* to be in progress, no thought of Lord Byron entered his mind, until he was told of his death; and, then, his first and his last thoughts were of fear and regret that he had left unfinished an agreement with Murray for the redemption of the 'Memoirs,' the value of which was at least doubled by the event. "Calling at Colburn's library," he says, "to inquire the address of the Editor of the 'Literary Gazette,' was told by the shopman that Lord Byron was dead. Could not believe it, but feared the worst, as his last letter to me, about a fortnight since, mentioned the severe attack of apoplexy or epilepsy which he had just suffered. Hurried to inquire. Met Lord Lansdowne, who said he feared it was but too true. Recollected then the unfinished state in which my agreement for the redemption of the 'Memoirs' lay. Lord L. said, 'you have nothing but Murray's fairness to depend upon.' Went off to the *Morning Chronicle* Office and saw the 'Courier,' which confirmed this most disastrous news. Hastened to Murray's, who was denied to me, but left a note for him to say that in consequence of this melancholy event I had called to know when it would be convenient to him to complete the arrangements with respect to the

May 14. p. 186.

'Memoirs' which we had agreed upon between us when I was last in town.'" Then he rushed up and down to Rogers, to Brougham, to Douglas Kinnaird, to Hobhouse, to Wilmot Horton, and to the Longmans, striving to persuade them all that Murray ought to return the 'Memoirs' to him. After he had utterly failed, had lost his money, and had seen the manuscript burned before his face, he returned home, and did not begin again to think of Lord Byron until another month or two had past. "July 1st to 9th" he writes:—"Began to think whether it would be necessary for me to go up to Lord Byron's funeral." He went, and what followed the funeral, must be told in his own words:—"12th left the hearse as soon as it was off the stones, and returned to get rid of my black clothes, and try to forget, as much as possible the wretched feelings I had experienced in them." "Went from Paternoster Row, to call upon the Morgans. Found Lady Morgan half dressed, and had the felicity of seeing the completion of her toilette, looking, however, much more at her handmaid (Morgan's pretty daughter) than at herself. From thence went to Mrs. Story's and supped with her. I and the girls went to Vauxhall, a most delicious night." On the 13th and the 15th he went to the opera. On the 14th he was prevented from going again to Vauxhall, with Mrs. Story, by a tremendous storm of rain, thunder, and lightning.

July 1 to 9. p. 211.

July 12 to 15. pp. 213 to 218.

A few months after the burning of the 'Memoirs' pp. 252-3. that he had intended to edit, and while he was seeking materials for a Life of Lord Byron, to which Longmans, his publishers in ordinary, looked earnestly and anxiously as the great source of his means to repay a large sum of money they had lent to him—the very two thousand guineas which he returned to Murray—he wrote to Colonel Doyle, the friend of Lady Byron and Mrs. Leigh, begging him to inform them of his intention to write Lord Byron's life. He said it had always been his friend's wish that if he survived he should write something about him, and he thought "it must be equally now the wish of his own family that a hand upon whose delicacy they could rely should undertake the task, rather than leave his memory at the mercy of scribblers who dishonour alike the living and the dead." Lady Byron gave neither assistance nor encouragement to his project. The rebuff should have made him but the more careful to observe those high professions of reverence to the living and the dead, that delicacy in which he had invited Lady Byron to trust. It seems rather to have inflamed some old grief.

There is an intimation, in a letter from Lord Byron before his marriage, that Moore had expressed a feeling akin to that of Captain Craigengelt, when his jaw fell as Bucklaw consulted him upon a "marrying matter." Lord Byron's answer is the very

1814. 14 Oct. vol. iii. p. 120.

counterpart of that with which Bucklaw comforted the Captain: "An' there were anything in marriage that would make a difference between my friends and me, particularly in your case, I would none on't." A woman like Lady Byron could not have approved Moore as a safe friend to her husband, and it is not improbable that he had seen this in one shape or other, and was influenced by it, and by the cold neglect of his proferred service, when he laid open the following secrets before her and before the world:—

20th Sept. 1814. vol. iii. p. 115-116.

Lord Byron to Moore.—"My mother of the Gracchi (that *are* to be) you think too straight-laced for me, although the paragon of only children, and invested with 'golden opinions of all sorts of men,' and full of 'most blest conditions,' as Desdemona herself."

p. 113.

Mr. Moore tells the story of the offer of marriage which has been already told. He raked up from the ashes of the memoranda given to Mrs. Leigh to be destroyed, a story disgraceful to Lord Byron and offensive to Lady Byron.

135. 136.

Byron is added to the list of poets who have been unhappy in marriage owing "to an unluckiness in the choice of helpmates, dictated, as that choice must be, by an imagination accustomed to deceive itself."

December, 1814.

On Lord Byron's arrival in town, he found his affairs so embarrassed as "even to suggest to his

mind the prudence of deferring his marriage. The die was however cast, and he had now no alternative but to proceed." vol. iii. p. 139.

Mr. Moore quotes, from memory, slight details of the wedding given in the destroyed memoranda: "In that memoir he described himself as waking, on the morning of his marriage, with the most melancholy reflections, on seeing his wedding-suit spread out before him. In the same mood he wandered about the grounds alone till he was summoned for the ceremony, and joined, for the first time on that day, his bride and her family. He knelt down, he repeated the words after the clergyman; but a mist was before his eyes, his thoughts were elsewhere; and he was but awakened by the congratulations of the bystanders to find that he was—married." 2nd Jan. 1815, p. 140.

2*nd February*, 1815. *Lord Byron to Moore.*—A letter mentioned above, written exactly one month after the wedding, in which he describes his wife's father as making a speech to the decanters, and adds, "I must go to tea—damn tea. I wish it was Kinnaird's brandy." p. 146.

10*th February*, 1815. *Lord Byron to Moore.*—A letter mentioned above, proposing a year's journey to Italy and Greece. "If I take my wife, you can take yours; and if I leave mine, you may do the same. 'Mind you stand by me in either case, brother Bruin.'" 149.

22*nd February*, 1815. *Same to Same.*—A letter

mentioned above. "So you won't go abroad, then, with me—but alone. I fully propose starting much about the time you mention, and alone, too."

152. *2nd March*, 1815. *Same to Same.*—Mentioned above. "I am in such a state of sameness," &c.

154. *8th March*, 1815. *Same to Same.*—Mentioned above. "Listening to that d——d monologue," &c.

157. *17th March*, 1815. *Same to Same.*—Mentioned above, speaking of his wife's uncle, Lord Wentworth. "I hardly know how to wish him in heaven."

175. *7th July*, 1815. *Same to Same.*—"Sir Ralph Noel, *late* Milbanke. He don't promise to be *late* Noel in a hurry."

1816, January, vol. iii. p. 198. This is Moore's story of the separation:—"She had left London about the middle of January, on a visit to her father's house in Leicestershire, and Lord Byron was, in a short time after, to follow her. They had parted in the utmost kindness. She wrote him a letter, full of playfulness and affection on the road, and, immediately on her arrival at Kirkby Mallory, her father wrote to acquaint Lord Byron that she would return to him no more." Moore proceeds to mention pecuniary embarrassments (eight or nine executions in the house within the year)—the standing alone on the desolate hearth, and the household gods shivered—with

p. 199. the climax—at such a moment "he was also doomed to receive the startling intelligence that his wife,

who had just parted with him in kindness, had parted with him—for ever."

Here he suppressed the truth, to make it appear that Lady Byron was the treacherous and deceitful thing, walking in crooked ways, which her husband had painted. He had before him Lord Byron's Journal of his daily life through January and February, 1816. Even the story of Donna Josepha and the first canto of 'Don Juan' told him of the suspicion of madness, the inquiry, the declaration of Lady Byron, when she knew that her husband was sane, that her duty both to God and man required her to part from him — he knew that she had believed her husband to be mad—the visit of Dr. Baillie and Dr. Lushington, and that the lawyers had recommended a divorce. All this truth was in his possession, and he kept it back.

vol. v. p. 234.
vol. xv. p. 126.
'Don Juan,' canto i. stanza 27.

29*th February*, 1816. *Lord Byron to Moore.*— "In all this business I am the sorriest for Sir Ralph." "I shall be separated from my wife; he will retain his ——" 202.

March, 1816. *Moore to Lord Byron.*—"As to defending you, the only person with whom I have yet attempted this task is myself, and considering the little I know upon the subject (or rather perhaps *owing* to this cause) I have hitherto done it with very tolerable success. After all, your *choice* was the misfortune. I never liked—but I'm here wandering." 203.

He! never liked! Was it possible that such a man should like such a woman?

205. 8*th March*, 1816. *Lord Byron to Moore.*—"Her nearest relatives are a * * * * "

Lady Byron perhaps misunderstood this. "Her husband may have spoken of them as niggardly.

206. "My child is very well and flourishing, I hear; but I must see also. I feel no disposition to resign it to the contagion of its grandmother's society."

207. *March*, 1816. *Moore to Byron.*—"I had certainly no right to say anything about the unluckiness of your choice." "I only feared that she might have been too perfect—too *precisely* excellent—too matter-of-fact a paragon for you to coalesce with comfortably."

vol. iii. p. 213. "The reputation of the object of his choice for every possible virtue (a reputation which had been, I doubt not, one of his own incentives to the marriage, from the vanity, reprobate as he knew he was deemed, of being able to win such a paragon)."

239. "He had alienated, as far as they had ever been his, the affections of his wife."

338. 28*th January*, 1817. *Lord Byron to Moore.*—"Fortune to be sure is a female, but not such a b . . . . as the rest (always excepting your wife and my sister from such sweeping terms)."

339. "I should many a good day have blown my brains out, but for the recollection that it would

have given pleasure to my mother-in-law; and even then, if I could have been certain to haunt her."

In this letter Lord Byron describes the encounter between Marianna and her sister-in-law.

10*th March*, 1817. *Same to Same.*—"I suppose now I shall never be able to shake off my sables in public imagination, more particularly since my moral * * * clove down my fame." 358.

He mentions in this letter that Marianna was looking over his shoulder while he wrote.

25*th March*, 1817. *Same to Same.*—"It is only the virtuous like * * * who can afford to give up husband and child, and live happy ever after." Marianna was by his side as he wrote this letter. She had proposed to run away with him and leave her husband and child. It is with her that he compares his wife to the disadvantage of Lady Byron. 363.

2*nd April*, 1817. *Lord Byron to Murray.*—After expressing great admiration of Otway, he adds—"all except that maudling b—h of chaste lewdness, and blubbering curiosity, Belvidera, whom I utterly despise, abhor, and detest." 371.

9*th April*, 1817. *Same to Same.*—"Do you think I would not have shot myself last year, had I not luckily recollected that Mrs. C—— and Lady N—— and all the old women in England would have been delighted?" "There are one or two people I have to put out of the world, and as many into it before I can 'depart in peace.'" vol. iv. p. 2.

vol. iv. p. 79. 2*nd February*, 1818. *Same to Same.*—"I have a great love for my little Ada, though perhaps she may torture me like * * * *."

91. 3*rd March*, 1818. *Lord Byron to Rogers.*—"As for my mathematical * * * * I am as well without her."

94. 16*th March*, 1818. *Lord Byron to Moore.*—"To bed, to bed, to bed, as mother S—— [Siddons?] (that tragical friend of the mathematical * * * *) says."

The same letter contains a tale of two of the poor women of his palace.

136. 19*th September*. *Same to Same.*—"I should have preferred Medea to any women that ever breathed; you may perhaps wonder that I don't in that case. I could have forgiven the dagger or the bowl, anything but the deliberate desolation piled upon me, when I stood upon my hearth with my household gods shivered around me. . . . Do you suppose I have forgotten or forgiven it? It has comparatively swallowed up in me every other feeling, and I am only a spectator upon earth, till a tenfold opportunity offers. It may come yet. There are others more to be blamed than * * * * and it is on them that my eyes are fixed incessantly."

In this letter Lord Byron gives a lively description of one of the poor women of his palace with whom he unfavourably contrasts Lady Byron.

Moore—Speaking of Byron's attachment to the

lady with whom he lived in adultery for four years : vol. iv. p. 144.
"An attachment differing altogether, both in duration and devotion, from any of those that, since the dream of his boyhood, had inspired him." "We can hardly perhaps" "consider it otherwise than as an event fortunate both for his reputation and happiness." "The fair object of this last and, with one single exception (he means Mary Chaworth), only real love of his whole life."

In the same book in which he published Lady Byron's confession that she had loved her husband two years before she accepted his hand, he benevolently tells her and the world that her husband had *never* really loved her.

Lord Byron to Murray. 7th June, 1819.—"I 164.
have never heard anything of Ada, the little Electra of Mycenæ. But there will come a day of reckoning even if I should not live to see it."

"The intense hatred he bore his mother-in-law." vol. iv. p. 219.

November, 1819.—"During his ravings at this time he was constantly haunted by the idea of his 257.
mother-in-law, taking every one that came near him for her, and reproaching those about him for letting her enter his room."

He was sick of a fever and delirious.

7th September, 1820. *Lord Byron to Murray.*— 337.
"You speak of Lady * * * illness She is not of those who die; the amiable only do, and those whose death would *do good* live."

vol. v. p. 87. 26*th January*, 1821. *Lord Byron's Journal.*—"The scoundrels who have all along persecuted me (with the help of * * who has crowned those efforts) will triumph; and when justice is done to me, it will be when this hand that writes is as cold as the hearts which have stung me."

148. 28*th April*, 1821. *Lord Byron to Moore.*—"Lady Noel has, as you say, been dangerously ill; but it may console you to learn that she is dangerously well again."

vol. v. p. 179. 14*th May*, 1821. *Same to Same.*—"And, finally, my mother-in-law recovered last fortnight, and my play was damned last week."

190. 4*th June*, 1821. *Same to Same.*—"I do not know whether I sent you my 'Elegy on the Recovery of Lady * * * ':—

> "Behold the blessings of a lucky lot:
> My play is damn'd and Lady * * * not."

261. 1*st October*, 1821. *Same to Same.*—"I should, to be sure, like to see out my eternal mother-in-law, not so much for her heritage, but from my natural antipathy. But the indulgence of this natural desire is too much to expect from the providence which presides over old women."

vol. vi. p. 22. 6*th April*, 1823. *Lord Byron to the Earl of Blessington.*—"I return you Dr. Parr's letter. I have met him at Payne Knight's and elsewhere, and he did me the honour once to be a patron of

mine, although a great friend of the other branch of the house of Atreus, and the Greek teacher (I believe) of my *moral* Clytemnestra. I say moral because it is true, and is so useful to the virtuous, that it enables them to do anything without the aid of an Ægisthus."

Mr. Moore had direct authority to suppress anything that might be thought objectionable in the manuscripts which he received for the purpose of defending the memory of Lord Byron. He was without excuse when he proclaimed to Lady Byron, before all the world, the fierce and bitter things which her husband had said and written in secret—when he publicly placed her name in foul contact with the linen-draper's wife and the Pythoness, and thrust before her eyes his own private opinion of her character and conduct both before and after marriage. Lord Byron was wont to invoke Nemesis to avenge upon others the wrongs which they had suffered from him. He little dreamed of the fate that overhung when he assigned to Moore the task of vindicating his fame, and, so doing, brought down the judgment of Dr. Lushington. "When," writes Lady Byron, "the conduct of my parents is brought forward in a disgraceful light by the passages selected from Lord Byron's letters, and by the remarks of his biographer, I feel bound to justify their characters from imputations which I know to be false." After telling the story of the separation,

vol. v. p. 36.

vol. vi. p. 276.

she concludes, without a word of accusation, remonstrance, or complaint:—

p. 280. "I have only to observe that, if the statements on which my legal advisers (the late Sir Samuel Romilly and Dr. Lushington) formed their opinion were false, the responsibility and the odium should rest with *me only*. I trust that the facts which I have here briefly recapitulated will absolve my father and mother from all accusations with regard to the part they took in the separation between Lord Byron and myself. They neither originated, instigated, nor advised that separation, and they cannot be condemned for having afforded to their daughter the assistance and protection which she claimed. There is no other near relative to vindicate their memory from insult. I am, therefore, compelled to break the silence which I had hoped always to observe, and to solicit from the reader of Lord Byron's life an impartial consideration of the testimony extorted from me."

Mr. Moore's blindness to the proper object of sympathy and admiration is in accordance with his quickness to see and resent an insinuation against

vol. i. p. xiv. vol. iv. p. 232. "the lady whose fate was connected with that of Lord Byron during his latter years." Fealty to the "new friend" would not have been tarnished by one compassionate thought for the wretchedness of Una, "nor in word, nor deed, ill meriting." His arguments upon the unreasonableness of trying the

moral conduct of a genius by ordinary standards: vol. iii. p. 220.
that men of the higher order of genius must needs 125.
be bad husbands, and that from the peculiarities by 126.
which, in most instances, these great labourers in the field of thought are characterised, they are
often unlucky in their choice of wives; that they 128.
are restless and solitary, like silk-worms; that 126.
the images of ideal good and beauty which surround the man of genius in his musings soon accustom him to consider all that is beneath this high standard as unworthy of his care, till at length the heart, becoming chilled as the fancy warms, it too often happens that, in proportion as he has refined and elevated his theory of all the social affections, he has unfitted himself for the practice of them; that a softening light is thrown round the scenes of 310.
Lord Byron's transgression at Venice by the vivacity and fancy, the passionate love of beauty, and the strong yearning after affection which mingled with the least refined of his attachments; that we may trace his errors there to a palliating source—to sensibility, whose very excesses showed its strength and depth—all this may best be answered by appealing to the judgment of Thomas Moore in a better mood:—

"'Tis too absurd—'tis weakness, shame,
This low prostration before Fame;
This casting down, beneath the car,
Of Idols, whatsoe'er they are,

Life's purest, holiest decencies,
To be career'd o'er as they please.
No; let triumphant Genius have
All that his loftiest wish can crave:
If he be worshipp'd, let it be
  For attributes his noblest, first—
Not with that base idolatry
  Which sanctifies his last and worst."

THE CHARACTER OF LADY BYRON.

[*First published, 1st October*, 1869.]

"She was governed by what she called fixed rules and principles."

LORD BYRON.

[NOTE.—The following Notes on the character of Lady Byron were written in July, 1869, sent for publication on the 7th of August, and accidentally mislaid. The publication, in the meantime, of Mrs. Stowe's 'True Story of Lady Byron's Life,' did not make any alteration necessary. In the paper on 'Lord Byron's Married Life,' it was shown, on the authority of Dr. Lushington, that there had been some offence on Lord Byron's part which made it impossible for his wife to return to him; and it was suggested that, as the existence of a sufficient cause of separation had been proved, it would be worse than useless to speculate upon the precise offence. But Dr. Lushington's opinion was grounded upon facts which he received from Lady Byron. If her truth should be called in question, it remained to be proved that whatever she spoke she spoke truly. Her truth has been questioned, and is now established upon the testimony of Lord Byron himself. A threefold purpose seems to have been accomplished—to tell Lady Byron's character by the mouth of her husband; to justify her refusal of reconciliation by the judgment of Dr. Lushington; and to prove, by the indisputable evidence of Lord Byron, that she spoke the truth to Dr. Lushington. The author of the 'True Story' celebrates the praise of Lady Byron rather out of the mouth of Mrs. Stowe than of Lord Byron, prefers the detail of a precise offence to Dr. Lushington's judgment, and assumes that those who will not believe Lady Byron's direct word will believe in the truth of what Mrs. Stowe says Lady Byron said. She has succeeded in awakening a curiosity which had slumbered for many years, and which it might have been well not to disturb. Her 'True Story' does not seem to be corroborated by

the 'Observations' of Thomas Campbell, in the year 1830; and justice to the memory of the lady who has been dragged before the world as a criminal, obliges men to notice that the story has been made public in violation of an implied and a sacred promise of secrecy; that it does not distinguish what is supposed to have been said by Lady Byron from the history which had been learned from many circles in England; that, after unnumbered cheap editions of Lord Byron's works had been published throughout the world, and 'Fare Thee Well' had been sung and recited by the masses in our streets through forty years, it seems strange that an intended cheap edition in 1856, and a panic terror lest the masses should be corrupted by base falsehood and seductive poetry, forced Lady Byron to take counsel from a person of another country, and entirely out of her own sphere. Above all things, it appears incredible that Lady Byron, who could not have failed to know the nature of the offence imputed by Mrs. Stowe, should have been so mindless of her duty to God and man as to wish she were a dog, so that she might lie at the door of that chamber. The errors, in those parts of the 'True Story' to which we can apply a test, prevent full assurance in other parts of the tale: the giving two years and a time to the year of married life; the inaccuracies in the narrative of Lord Byron's death; the telling that he was dissuaded from publishing a Romance which he did not propose to publish, and did not finish; that when Moore had prepared his 'Memoirs,' he sent them to Lady Byron, and that she wrote to him a letter in reply; and that the separation was the act of Lord, not of Lady Byron.*

* It has been supposed that in 'Lord Byron's Married Life' it was intended to charge him with the crime which Mrs. Stowe imputes. This is a misapprehension which has arisen from too great success in the labour to be obscure. Such an offence was not, and is not, believed to have been the cause of irrevocable separation. Lord Thurlow's argument in the House of Lords was mentioned to show that there were cases in which a woman might not be reconciled to her husband. When it was added—"It would be worse than useless to speculate upon the precise offence: it was probably known only to themselves (Lord and Lady Byron), and to those two or three, or perhaps four, persons (Sir Samuel Romilly, Dr. Lushington, Mrs. Clermont, and perhaps, at a later time, Lady Noel) to whom, seeking protection, it had been divulged by Lady Byron"—the crime alleged by Mrs. Stowe was, by necessary inference, left out of the dark catalogue.

It has been thought strange that the very old and, as it is said, almost forgotten tale of the separation of Lord and Lady Byron should be revived for the benefit of this generation. But the story will not die, nor will it sleep, until, by common consent, the truth of facts which would seem to have been established beyond the power of contradiction shall be acknowledged; nor, further, until it be agreed that the conduct of men of the higher order of mind must be judged by ordinary standards—at least, so far as may be necessary to do justice to their fellow-mortals of ordinary clay. Lord Byron did more than any man to confound the colours of good and evil. To him, both were alike subjects for mockery. There was no real good on this earth, and nothing beyond it. Intellectual might alone was to be worshipped, and that did but bring misery to the possessor. Those who hold such doctrines to be false and fatal, may reasonably inquire in what way of life they were learned, and will not be frighted from the inquiry, though they be represented as creeping things riot-ing on the decay of noble natures; aspiring dunces, whose savage envy is gratified by the agonies of a noble spirit, and the degradation of a great name; herded wolves, obscene ravens and vultures —

dullards who would indict the Sultan for bigamy before a Middlesex Grand Jury.

Before vindicating the character of Lady Byron from the censure of a 'Review of Recollections of Lord Byron,' in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for last July, it is wished to lay aside all thought of the mystery which has hung over the separation. All that we can desire to know is known. Assuming that she spoke truth to Dr. Lushington—and if that cannot be proved nothing can be proved—duty forbade her to return to her husband; and her justification, and his condemnation as the author of the letters published in his 'Life' by Moore, of the verses written on hearing that she was ill, and of the first canto of 'Don Juan,' are complete. There is no longer an excuse for lawless and uncertain thoughts wandering in the region of imaginary crime. Perhaps they may be restrained, by offering, hypothetically, one of a thousand causes that might be guessed. It will be understood that the particular cause suggested is merely imaginary.

Let it be supposed that Lord Byron, suffering under what has been called moral impulse—not amounting to legal insanity, nor absolving him from responsibility—was prompted to poison his wife, and had offered her the cup. She feared that he was insane, and would commit suicide. In the ignorance of her innocence she took counsel with Mrs. Clermont, the genial confidante, to whose ill-

natured interposition he attributed his domestic troubles. Learning that there was no mental disease, she consulted Dr. Lushington, and, in the end, was told that she could not return to her husband without the guilt of self-murder. For his sake, and for the sake of their daughter—to whom, whether the insanity were mental or moral, the discovery would have been most injurious—and for shame and horror, she kept silence. Whether this hypothesis be accepted or cast aside, will not in the least affect the argument in her favour. If it be unjust to him it is not so intentionally, and is discarded beforehand.

'Life and Works,' vol. iii. p. 202. Lady Blessington, p. 22, cited in 'Blackwood,' p. 29.

It perplexes a bystander to perceive how the hearts of men are steeled against a woman in whom, to say the worst, so little fault is found. If there are executions in the house while she is in the pains of childbirth, her husband is tenderly wrapped up, and caudled, while she lies unheeded, or is looked at askance, as the Jonah for whose sake the storm came upon him, the hidden cause of the shivered houshold gods. His smart under the lash of a critic of 'Don Juan' is compassionately noted, without one thought of her. Yet it was a trial for the mother that her child should be born among bailiffs—the husband's verses were scorpions to the wife—and, after all, the executions were not for her debts, nor did she write the poem. Something of this leaning to the stronger side may be ascribed to his having

'Life and Works.' vol. iii. pp. 199, 239.

'Blackwood,' p. 32.

been head of the craft by which the lower order of mind is governed, but not all. Subjects most willing to be led tenderly by the nose will kick against open and gross tyranny. Perhaps the main cause is to be found in that readiness of the better sex to forgive, which persuades men to believe that a wife who will not return to a guilty and repentant husband must needs be cold and hard; that she never could have really loved the prodigal; that she is guilty of the consequences which may flow from dooming him to pass the rest of his days among the swine, and that it would be of ill example to suffer an unforgiving wife to go unwhipped of masculine justice. It seems predetermined that Lady Byron shall not escape condemnation. Hitherto the imputations against her have been small and flitting, hard to catch, and therefore not easily crushed. She was jealous, precise, methodical, straitlaced, exacting, and utterly incapable to understand her husband; there were faults on both sides. All this has been inferred without testimony, and told to the teeth of testimony, because she parted from, and would not return to, her husband. Now, when it appears that, if she spoke the truth, he had raised an impassable barrier against her return, we are told—not in so many words, but in words which have this meaning or none—that she lied to Dr. Lushington. It comes to this: either she falsely charged her husband with an odious crime, in order

to extort a separation which he had refused; or, she sacrificed her whole life to duty, and, with deadly power to requite evil for evil, held on in silent endurance to the end. She was a paragon among women, or a monster.

It will not be hard to discover where the truth lies, though all the evidence comes from one side—from the works of Lord Byron himself, from his Life by the bosom-friend chosen to guard his memory against censure, and from the Review in 'Blackwood.'* Not only does the evidence which remains to us come from witnesses unfavourable to Lady Byron, but it had been sifted by Lord Byron's friends, who burned and suppressed much, out of regard to his memory. Those friends who saw the destroyed proofs declare that they were shameful to him, and threw no light on the separation. Those who have not seen, profess to believe that if the evidence had been preserved it would have cleared him and convicted her. The testimony preserved is dealt with by her foes in this wise: When the husband praises and absolves the wife it is a generous confession, and to use it against him is

* Since these Notes were written, the writer has read 'Observations by Thomas Campbell on Lady Byron's Remarks,' published in the 'New Monthly Magazine' for April, 1830, and has borrowed notices of a letter from Lady Byron to Campbell, and of a letter from Mrs. Leigh to Mrs. Clermont. There is not a word in the 'Observations' to justify any calumny against Campbell—nothing that does not seem to be honourable, just, and true.

'Blackwood,' pp. 27, 28. 'Life and Works,' vol. vi. pp. 236, 241, 242.

cruel; when he accuses himself, it was merely his "mobility;" he designed only to amuse, and to awaken curiosity and interest. Moore, indeed, surmises that the occult cause of the separation, round which Lady Byron and her legal advisers threw such formidable mystery, might have been nothing more than some imposition of that kind, some dimly hinted confession of undefined horror, intended to mystify and surprise, which the hearer so little understood as to take in sober seriousness. But the romantic mystification which, as he boasts, could not deceive him, would hardly mislead Dr. Lushington, whose opinion was not grounded upon any dimly-hinted confession of undefined horror, but on facts. The solution offered proves, however, that it had never entered into the mind of Mr. Moore to doubt Lady Byron's truth, which will prevail in spite of these manifold disadvantages. Her name cannot, indeed, be snatched from the burning furnace of her husband's verse and prose, but he may be made to bear witness that, in the midst of the fire, it stands unharmed.

That any man could be persuaded to undertake the distasteful and forlorn adventure of sullying her fair fame, is a mystery as deep as that out of which the present controversy arose. It could not be by the common motive which constrains an unwilling advocate to wash his Ethiopian white, and cast the clouded water on the adversary; nor the pride of

genius, ready to maintain any thesis, and mindful of George Primrose's discovery that the best things remain to be said on the wrong side. May it be an attempt to play upon readers as Byron would have played upon Moore, waiting ready to laugh at the simple ones who may take him at his word? He can hardly mean to be serious who couples the names of Wellington and Brougham, and pronounces that if Byron's marriage had been a happy one, the course of events of the present century might have been materially changed. 'Blackwood,' p. 25.

In considering the cause of the separation of Lord and Lady Byron, it might have seemed unnecessary to travel back to their childhood; but it is done, and not without a purpose. With something of the sly prevarication of Ralpho, it is implied that because Lord Byron, an only child, was notoriously spoiled, therefore Lady Byron, also an only child, was spoiled also, by seclusion, restraint, and parental idolatry; and this in spite of a cloud of witnesses, and the record of her husband in his letters before marriage, and in the 'Sketch.' As a girl she was "a kind of pattern in the North:" all the powers of evil were "foiled by that youthful mind." But though the childhood must be part of the story, the wooing need not. It is cast aside as superfluous; and still there is a cause. Those disgraceful scenes are avoided, in which the lover can only be paralleled by that Irish peasant who could not see p. 32. 'Life and Works,' vol. iii. p. 121. vol. x. p. 190. vol. iii. pp. 113, 114.

the difference of a cow betwixt one woman and another.

Then comes the married life, from the 2nd of January 1815 to the 15th of January 1816. This great act of the drama is closed in these words :—

'Blackwood,' p. 27.

"Owing to the fortunate accident of Moore's absence, and to Lord Byron's singular frankness, we have a picture of his first and only year of married life, far more vivid, and more trustworthy, than any we could have possessed by other means. . . . There was no cloud in the sky indicating the storm that was about to burst on his head. There might be ebullitions of temper and hasty words, amply sufficient to account for the generous admission of error which was afterwards so cruelly tortured into a confession of guilt; but with these letters before us, we say confidently, that it is impossible that during the period from their marriage, up to Lady Byron's departure from London, anything could have occurred to afford reasonable cause to prevent her return."

If this confident position can be maintained, there is no longer any room for contention. Certainly, nothing that came *after* the separation could be the sufficient cause of separation; and if it be impossible that it could have come *before*, it could not have come at all; and, therefore, Lady Byron had no reasonable cause for the refusal to return to her husband. But never was there more occasion

to give in earnest the reproof that Prior took to himself in jest—"Authors, before they write, should read." Without doubt, that which had occurred to prevent the return, does not appear in Lord Byron's letters; and to look for it there were as wise as to search for sunbeams in cucumbers. Is it likely that he should tell his friends of an attempt to poison his wife? But to enable us to allow any weight to the affirmation that the letters show that no such thing had occurred, it would be necessary carefully to abstain from looking at them. So far are they from being incompatible with the existence of a reasonable cause, that they show something like signs of weariness and disgust before "the treacle-moon" was over, as well as on the day after it had set, when the husband cursed the tea to which he was summoned, and longed to be drinking brandy with Moore. Between the return of the unhappy pair to London, on the 18th of March, 1815, to the day of separation, we have only seven letters from Lord Byron to Moore. In not one of them is there a trace of conjugal affection. In the letter of the 7th July, 1815, he writes: "Perhaps you and Mrs. Moore will pay us a visit at Seaham in the course of the autumn. If so, you and I (*without* our *wives*) will take a lark to Edinburgh and embrace Jeffrey." In the letter of the 4th of November Lady Byron is not named, and in that of the 5th of January the wife and child are thus

March 2, 1815. 'Life and Works,' vol. iii. p. 146. 1815, April 23, June 12, July 7, October 28, October 31. Nov. 4, 1816. January 5. vol. iii. pp. 167, 169, 173, 180, 187, 189, 195.

mentioned: "The little girl was born on the 10th of December last; her name is Augusta Ada (the second a very antique family name, I believe not used since the reign of King John). She was, and is, very flourishing and fat, and reckoned very large for her days. Squalls and sucks incessantly. Are you answered? Her mother is doing very well, and up again. I have now been married a year on the second of this month, heigh-ho!"

There is a double defect of vision. That which is not, is seen, and there is blindness to what glares upon us. After telling that there was nothing to cloud the happiness of the one year of married life, but possible ebullitions of temper, and hasty words which are of every day's experience—nothing to indicate the storm which was about to burst—it is said that everything connected with the subject that deserves the name of evidence has been laid before us. Yet, besides the sufficient cause—the existence of which depends upon Lady Byron's truth, and the ignorance of her innocence, and her husband's allowance that she believed him to be mad—there was much to indicate the coming storm. There were the sixteen articles of complaint; the speedy flight of the indications of a contented heart; the rare and formal mention of the wife; the unquiet, the weariness, the melancholy—signs of that habit of mind which, under the pressure of disquiet and disgust, sought relief

'Blackwood,' p. 33.

'Life and Works,' vol. iii. pp. 222, 287.

p. 214.

p. 198.

p. 196.

in the sense of freedom, which told that there were homes elsewhere; the confessions that there had been too much to blame and regret; that bitterness and convulsion were the elements of the father, and the daughter had been born in one, and nurtured in the other; the portrait of Don José, in whom Lord Byron was pleased to represent himself as a man regretting that he had wedded a learned virgin, tired of scientific conversation, weary of his wife's insipid perfection, and keeping two mistresses; the picture of the neglected wife, with a great opinion of her own good qualities, and a devil of a spirit, mixing up fancies with realities, and losing no opportunity of getting her husband into a scrape; the sneer at "peace and innocence and bliss," worse than anything which Milton has attributed to Satan looking upon Eden; and the catastrophe :—

vol. iv. p. 221. 'Childe Harold,' canto iii. stanza 118.

vol. xv. pp. 120 to 122, 127. 'Don Juan,' canto i. stanzas 18 to 23, 34

Stanza 26.

"Don José and the Donna Inez led
For some time an unhappy sort of life;
* Wishing each other damned, divorced, or dead,
They lived respectably as man and wife.
Their conduct was exceedingly well-bred,
And gave no outward signs of inward strife,
Until, at length, the smothered fire broke out,
And put the business past all kind of doubt.

Stanza 27.

"For Inez called some druggists and physicians,
And tried to prove her loving lord was *mad*,

* The printed verse is, "Wishing each other not divorced, but dead." The verse in the MS. (note to stanza 26) is given because it may perhaps record some of the "bitter words."

But as he had some lucid intermissions,
She next decided he was only *bad;*
Yet when they asked her for her depositions,
No sort of explanation could be had,
Save that her duty, both to man and God,
Required this conduct—which seemed very odd."

We are told, perhaps in mockery, that Lord Byron's generous admissions of error are cruelly tortured into a confession of guilt. This complaint assumes that he had not been guilty of any act fatal to reunion. Now, it is certain that Lady Byron did accuse him to Dr. Lushington of such an act, and that, in consequence of her accusation, every monstrous vice was imputed to him, his name was tainted, and he was supposed guilty of every crime, possible or impossible. And then we are asked to believe that in the very dregs of the bitter business, while he was suffering under these cruel calumnies through her malignant falsehood—falsehood which it is scarcely possible to conceive that a husband could forgive, even after confession and a long term of unfeigned repentance,—we are asked to believe that, at this very time, Lord Byron not only forgave his wife, but published now unpremeditated, now laboured praises of her purity and truth, declared that where there was blame it belonged to him, called upon his friends to bear witness that he had never spoken of her with disrespect or unkindness, entreated them not to believe all they heard, nor attempt to defend him, as that

would give mortal offence. This was not the voice of generous confession, but of the fear of that shame which, if his wife had spoken, would have driven him to die by his own hand—he had made up his mind.

'Life and Works,' vol. iii. pp. 201, 339. vol. iv. p. 2.

These generous confessions were uttered while the treaty for separation was depending, and the lawyers were doing their utmost for divorce. Long afterwards, being assured of his wife's silence, no fault being found in her since the separation, he wrote of her to his friends in words which his biographer dared not repeat, and held her out to the world, to use his own epitome, as a "disagreeable, casuistical, and by no means respectable female pedant;" and, in language not to be misunderstood, charged Donna Inez—"the saint in her moralities," under whose name he presented his wife—with the sin of adultery.* Such were his generous confessions of error when he was free from fear. Still she kept silence.

vol. xv. p. 127.

vol. xv. pp. 134, 140. 'Don Juan,' canto i. stanzas 51, 66 to 68.

And her silence is imputed to her as a crime; "*upon her own showing*, she lives with her husband for more than a year, without communicating to her own parents or to any one else any cause for discomfort." It is not for a wife to brawl, or threaten

'Blackwood,' p. 31.

* It does not seem that he ever made such a suggestion in prose. There is a blank left in a letter to Murray, in a passage relating to his paternity; but the words were probably omitted only because they were coarse (vol. iv. p. 261).

or cry aloud. It may not be her bounden duty, but it is her glory, to keep silent her husband's offences so long as silence is without sin. "She" (again says the 'Review') "at any rate must have known the utter falsehood of at least ninety-nine out of a hundred of the slanders against the husband she had sworn to love, and the father of the child that was hanging at her breast; yet no word escaped her—thus by her silence giving sanction and authority to the vilest of these vile fabrications." Perhaps it might be answered, that a woman suing for separation is not permitted to intermeddle, and that Sir Samuel Romilly and Dr. Lushington should bear the blame. But let that pass. How, if the hundredth offence were one which, inferred by the world from what she said and what she did not say, would have destroyed her husband, and set a mark upon their child? Should she deny the ninety-and-nine so that the truth of the hundredth might be implied, or leave it undistinguished among a crowd of lying rumours? She could say nothing that would not injure him, unless she could say that there were no other than the common causes of separation; that she could not say, and *therefore* she kept silence. It does not seem to have been perceived that all depends upon the truth and nothing upon the concealment. If the charge of an odious crime against her husband were false, Lady Byron was an abandoned woman, and no concealment would

aggravate her guilt. If true, it was concealed in mercy, and in spite of cruel provocation.

Common fame may answer for her own offences. The roar of "John Bull, the maddest and most absurd of beasts," was hasty; but it was not "base, mean, envious, and revengeful," nor an "outburst of idiotic frenzy." It was the same roar that Lord Byron's contemporaries, George the Fourth and Long Wellesley, were doomed to hear. Lord Macaulay's review of Moore's 'Life of Byron' may be "eloquent," but under favour, it is not "just and manly." The good Homer sometimes winks, Saint Bernard did not see all things, and a humble inquirer may be forgiven if he ask whether in this particular instance the critic was not bent upon the production of a brilliant essay rather than the discovery of an unwelcome truth? But here again, with regard to concealment, is everything that deserves the name of evidence brought forward? If Lady Byron concealed from the world, did she make no parting sign to her husband? Where is her letter, mentioned in his letter of the 17th of November, 1821? He destroyed it, and with it evidence for his acquittal or condemnation. He does not pretend that it was untrue. "I burnt," he says, "your last note for two reasons: firstly, it was written in a style not very agreeable; and, secondly, I wished to take your word without documents." These last words will be again placed

'Blackwood,' pp. 27, 28, 29.

p. 25.

'Life and Works,' vol. vi. p. 30.

in the balance when we come to weigh her truthfulness.

'Blackwood,' pp. 29, 30, 33.

But Lord Byron "went to his grave in total ignorance of the offence with which he was charged." "The cruel silence was persevered in until he was in his grave," and the "poisonous miasma in which his wife enveloped the character of her husband" was not dispersed by her breath.

Perhaps, in looking at the proof offered in support of these hard words, we shall find in its insufficiency evidence that Lord Byron did not live or die in ignorance. Whether he really was ignorant is a question of some moment. There were sixteen articles of complaint, in which the alleged offence was not included. When he had refused to accept those charges as good cause for separation, he was told of a seventeenth; and when he demanded what that seventeenth was, he received for answer, that it forbade his wife to return to him, and if he insisted on her return, he must hear the reason of her refusal in a court of law. If he had not known before what his wife regarded as her great cause of complaint, that answer—supposing the offence to have been real, not feigned or imaginary—pointed it out to him. Therefore, since it is highly probable, that if he were truly ignorant, the charge was not true, it is important to observe the absence of all signs of ignorance, and the proof of his holding already in his hands that for which he professed to seek.

The evidence of ignorance is offered under three heads:—

1. "Lady Blessington says:—'In all his conversations relative to Lady Byron (and they are frequent), he declares that he is totally unconscious of the cause of her leaving him, but suspects that the illnatured interposition of Mrs. Charlemont led to it.'" Here the quotation is cut short. The words which immediately follow:—"It is a strange business! He declares that he left no means untried to effect a reconciliation;" and, again:—"I did not enter into the causes or motives of the separation, because I knew them not;" and her notice of the embarrassment, the blushing, the stammering which prefaced his answer to the question, Why, being a free agent, he did not go to England?—a question asked because he so often spoke of his yearning wish to go there—do not show any strong assurance in Lady Blessington's mind that he had told her all of the strange business that he could tell. His letter of the 8th of March, 1816, gave the same feeling of surprise to Moore, who, on the following 4th of April, wrote to Lady Donegal:—"In a letter I have had lately from Lord Byron, he says, 'There is not existing a better, a brighter, or more amiable creature than Lady Byron.' Is not this odd? What can be the reason of the separation?"

'Blackwood,' p. 29.

Lady Blessington's 'Conversations,' p. 22.

p. 87.

p. 400.

Lord Russell's 'Life of Moore,' vol. ii. p. 97.

If Lord Byron had not known the precise offence with which he stood charged, he would have an-

swered that he had been unfaithful, negligent, and bitter, and his wife would not forgive, and chose, in her caprice, to make a mystery. Consciousness of the real cause dictated the answer that he gave by word of mouth—but not in writing. It is remarkable that in not one of the three hundred and thirty letters written after the separation, beginning with those in which it was entreated that he might not be defended, is there an intimation of ignorance. This could scarcely have happened but by design. If, as he declared, his whole desire had ever been to obtain a specific charge in a tangible shape, is it not morally certain that some sign of his desire, or of his ignorance, would have appeared in his letters? He dared to say what he did not dare to write. He had not wholly cast off the fear of man, and would not risk the shame of a discovery that he had set his hand to a deliberate disavowal of knowledge which he possessed. His denial, in conversation, is of no weight at all, for if he knew, he would not confess; but the absence of denial, in his letters, while often referring to the separation, is very significant.

'Life and Works,' from vol. iii. p. 199, to the end of the 'Life.'

2. "To Murray he wrote:—'No one can more desire a public investigation than I do.'" When he might have had a public investigation, he submitted to a sentence; and it was but a vain boast to say that he desired it four years afterwards, when it was impossible. Why did he not publish a plain tale,

'Blackwood,' p. 29. 'Life and Works,' vol. iv. p. 269.

Dec. 10, 1819.

concluding with a charge against his wife of having brought a false accusation against him?

3. Once more, and this is the last proof:—

"Nor was the challenge for investigation confined to personal conversation and correspondence." "In a pamphlet which was sent to Murray for publication and put to press, though it did not appear until some time afterwards, in reference to" his separation from Lady Byron, he says: "I never have had—and God knows my whole desire has ever been to obtain it!—any specific charge, in a tangible shape, submitted to me by the adversary, or by others, unless the atrocities of public rumour and the mysterious silence of the lady's legal advisers may be deemed such." . . . "I was a little surprised by finding myself condemned without being favoured with the act of accusation, and to perceive, in the absence of this portentous charge or charges, whatever it or they were to be, that every possible or impossible crime was rumoured to supply its place, and taken for granted." 'Blackwood,' p. 29.

But this pamphlet, dedicated to D'Israeli the elder, which "did not appear for some time afterwards," was, in fact, suppressed until after Lord Byron's death, and he, twice, wrote to Murray desiring that it might not be printed. Even in the suppressed pamphlet, while evading the truth, by saying that he had never received a specific charge in a tangible shape, Lord Byron does not venture 'Life and Works,' vol. xv. p. 57. vol. iv. p. 308.

vol. v. p. 3. to affirm that he was ignorant of the charge. To what does the challenge for investigation amount? Conversations with persons, and a letter to a person who could not answer the challenge, and certainly would not send it on to her who could—and an unpublished pamphlet.

On the other hand, the evidence that he did know is irresistible. He was told that, unless he consented to separation, a charge, out of which had arisen against him atrocious rumours of monstrous vice, would be brought forward in a court of law. He submitted to the sentence of separation, and so prevented the charge from being made public. Afterwards, in writing to the wife who is now accused of having destroyed him by a false accusation of some hateful crime, he leaves open the question whether offence had been solely on his side or chiefly on hers, and does not pretend that he was ignorant, or intimate a desire to be informed of the specific charge.

'Blackwood,' pp. 32, 33. We are told that the destruction of Lord Byron's Memoirs, or confessions, was a crime—committed, as crimes often are, from honourable motives—a most lamentable error. As it is allowed to be in the highest degree improbable that they would have thrown any light upon the cause of the separation—that a few pages were too gross and indelicate for publication—and the rest, with little exception, contained no traces of his genius and no

interesting details of his life, the crime may be forgiven. His offer to show these Memoirs to Professor Wilson, the supposed hostile critic of his life and morals, and to Lady Byron, is regarded as a strong proof of singular good faith; and the destruction of the manuscript is regretted, more for the loss of the proof of what it *did not* than for anything it *did* contain. But whether Lord Byron had known, or had been ignorant, the secret would not have been divulged in the Memoirs. Certainly they were not after the model of the confessions of Cïapperello di Prato; but it is equally certain that they did not reveal the mystery. His motive for making the offer and her reasons for refusing it are apparent. If she refused, his friends would say that she had rejected a fair opportunity to correct errors, wilful or undesigned, and that she feared to face the truth; if she read and made no comment, she would be held to have admitted that the whole truth had been shown. He was careful to preserve proof that the offer had been made. He wrote to Murray: "You must also have from Mr. Moore the correspondence between me and Lady B., to whom I offered the sight of all which regards herself in these papers. This is important. He has *her* letter,* and a copy

'Life and Works,' August 10, 1821. vol. v. p. 223.

* This letter of Lady Byron (a letter of the 10th of March, 1820), given to Moore, Lord Byron did not remember when he wrote to her, on the 17th of November, 1821—"Your letters I returned" . . . "I burnt your last note;" nor when he said to Lady Blessington, in May, 1823—"Lady Byron has refused to answer my letters.

'New Monthly,' April, 1830, p. 379.

of my answer." Lady Byron knew that to deny an assertion here and there would virtually admit the truth of the rest, and that if she were to enter into a full explanation she must detail things which she would not disclose. Besides, she foresaw that to revive the controversy which would follow from any publication of the story of the separation must be injurious to her daughter, and perhaps to her husband.

Moore's 'Byron,' vol. iii. pp. 113, 218; vol. iv. pp. 125, 184, 242, 251, 269, 272, 273, 327, 328; vol. v. pp. 1, 2, 28, 35, 36, 40, 110, 111, 147, 193, 195, 214, 223, 225, 229, 233 to 236, 238, 244, 245, 247, 255 to 257, 260, 267, 269, 270, 282, 284, 347, 351.

The history of these Memoirs, what they contained, how they were burned, and by whom, can be told with some degree of certainty. It is probable that they have not perished altogether. Beside stolen extracts, and, perhaps, copies, a copy of what is called the First Part, and of all, or almost all, the Second Part, was made by Lord Byron's desire.* The original had passed through so many hands that it was well nigh worn out. Moore names three ladies to whom he lent it, and, after it had been burned Mrs. Shelley wrote out for him her recollections of the First Part which had been lent to her by Lord Byron.

I have written to her repeatedly, and am still in the habit of doing so;" nor when he wrote to Lady Blessington, on the 3rd of the same month—"All Lady Byron's letters were in her own possession before I left England, and we have had no correspondence since—at least, on her part" (vol. vi. pp. 30, 28, 27).

* It appears from a letter (cited in the margin) of Mr. Murray, the son and successor of Lord Byron's correspondent, that this copy was burned with the original.

As early as the month of July, 1818, Lord Byron had prepared materials for Memoirs of his life, not to be used for a hundred years to come. In August, 1819, he had heard of Moore's great loss through the misconduct of his deputy in a sinecure office at Bermuda. Two months afterwards they met in Venice, and he gave him a manuscript, in seventy-eight folio sheets, of his adventures down to the year 1816, saying that it was not to be published in his lifetime. Subject to that condition, Moore might do with it as he pleased. This was the First Part, which Lady Byron was invited to read, and contained, as her husband said, some fun, with a detailed account of his marriage and its consequences. The Second Part, in which, by his own confession, were things not fit to be published, treated of the irregular life he had led, and was given to Moore, in December, 1820, and May, 1821, in two portions, one of eighteen sheets, the other of two or three more. Down to the month of July in the former year, Lord Byron seemed to think that he still had some control over the manuscript; but in December it was considered to be the absolute property of Moore, and Lord Byron suggested that it should be sold to Murray or to Longmans, still subject to the condition of remaining unpublished during the author's life. In the year 1821, through his influence, Murray bought the manuscript in July, received it in September, and, in October,

Lord Russell's 'Moore,' vol. ii. p. 135; vol. iii. pp. 80, 116, 137, 182, 211, 212, 251, 260, 280, 281, 292, 294, 298 to 300, 345, 347, 350; vol. iv. pp. 44, 45, 176, 186 to 205, 211 to 217, 253, 258, 332; vol. v. pp. 17, 18, 38, 40 to 43, 51, 66, 71, 154, 173, 196, 234, 238, 257, 259 to 262, 268. Medwin's 'Conversations,' pp. 40–42, 70, Letter 6th, October, 1869. of Mr. Murray, the son, reprinted from the *Academy*, in the *Daily News* of the 9th October.

1820, July, December.

1821, July, September, October.

paid for it two thousand guineas—an enormous price for a book which could not yield any profit during a life of which, as yet, only thirty-three years were spent; a price hardly to be understood by those who were not living witnesses of the world's fierce hunger after his history of himself. To the amusement of the two poets, Murray declared that, before he could have any benefit from his bargain it would probably have cost him, by the accumulation of interest, eight thousand guineas, since, according to the ordinary duration of human life, Lord Byron would live for twenty-eight years to come. There is no likelihood that any exact calculation was made, yet, considering the risk of a long term of barren ownership, it is probable that the value of the Memoirs, with immediate power to publish, was not reckoned at less than four or five thousand guineas. Though thus sold, they were still, in some sort, under Moore's superintending
November. care. By a formal agreement he promised that if he lived until the time of publication he would edit the work, and, at the same time, Lord Byron wrote to Murray that Moore had a discretionary power to alter any expressions which did not seem *good* to *him*, adding, he "is a better judge than you or I."

4 Nov. The purchase-money had scarcely been received, when Moore, troubled by a suggestion from Lord Holland that in selling the manuscript he had

stored up the weapons of a future warfare against private character, meditated a plan for repaying Murray. After a night's reflection, he resolved to let things remain as they were, and wrote to Lord Holland, justifying his resolution. Six months passed, and then something was done by which, as he persuaded himself, the sale was converted into a loan. The transaction is not precisely explained, but it appears that he gave a bond to Murray, that there was a new agreement between them, and that Lord Byron was to be asked to execute an assignment of the copyright. Hobhouse and Douglas Kinnaird had, over and over again, advised Lord Byron to resume possession of the Memoirs. It is probable that their advice was no secret to Murray; that he feared lest his right should be called in question, if not by Lord Byron, by those who would come after him, and that the bond and the new agreement obliged Moore, within a given time, to procure the assignment, or to repay the two thousand guineas, with interest. As new conditions were required from him, he was free to stipulate for power to act according to Lord Holland's suggestion, and at his request, Murray, "with the best grace imaginable," gave him the right to repurchase the manuscript at any time during the life of Lord Byron. He wished for something more. He desired, but in vain, power to repurchase within three months after Lord Byron's death. Nothing could

5 Nov.

1822, April.

Letter of Mr. Murray, the son, above-mentioned, 9th October, 1869.

be more unreasonable. Murray would have risked a great loss, without a chance of gain. If Lord Byron lived to the age of seventy-five years, the two thousand guineas would have grown, by the accumulation of interest, to sixteen thousand, while, in the event of his early death, Moore would claim a thing worth four or five thousand guineas, paying two thousand and a few years' interest.

1823, March. A year passed away without the purposed repurchase, and Moore was reminded of his bond in a letter from Murray which he thought uncivil, and

1824, April. answered in kind. After another year, we learn that the assignment of the copyright to Murray had been executed by Lord Byron, and was in the hands of his agent, Douglas Kinnaird. Murray complained to Moore that it was withheld from

1 April. him. Moore went to Kinnaird, who, with the sanction of Hobhouse, gave up the assignment. They thought that Murray ought to have it until Moore

2nd. could effect the intended redemption. On the 2nd of April, Moore gave the deed to Murray, telling him again of his intention to repurchase. On the

19th. 19th Lord Byron died. The value of the manuscript was doubled; and Moore had no more title to call it his own than he would have had to claim a prize in the lottery because he had talked of buying a ticket.

What these Memoirs contained, we know from the testimony of Lord Byron and his nearest friends,

among the rest, Mr. Moore, who strove, almost to agony, to save them from the fire.

"You will find many opinions, and some fun, with a detailed account of my marriage and its consequences." Lord Byron, Moore's 'Life,' vol. iv. p. 252.

"There are very few licentious adventures of my own, or scandalous anecdotes that will affect others in the book." Letter to Murray. Lord Byron, Medwin, pp. 41, 42, 70.

"A very full account of my marriage and separation is contained in my Memoirs."

"The Second Part will prove a good lesson to young men, for it treats of the irregular life I led at one period, and the fatal consequences of dissipation. There are few parts that may not, and none that will not, be read by women."

"When you read my Memoirs you will learn the evils, moral and physical, of true dissipation. I assure you my life is very entertaining and instructive."

"Mr. Murray, on his side, had confided the manuscript to Mr. Gifford, who on perusal declared it too gross for publication. This opinion had become known to Lord Byron's friends and relations." Mr. Gifford. Lord Russell's 'Life of Moore,' vol. iv. p. 191.

"Though the Second Part of the Memoirs was full of very coarse things, yet (with the exception of about three or four lines) the First Part contained nothing which, on the score of decency, might not be most safely published." Mr. Moore. Id. p. 188.

p. 190. "Preserving what was innoxious and creditable to Lord Byron, of which I assured him there was a considerable proportion."

p. 194. "Stanhope, Lord Mansfield's son-in-law, said, 'You have done the finest thing that ever man did—you have saved the country from a pollution.' Moore stopped him, saying—'There was but very little of an objectionable nature in the first or principal part of the Memoirs.'"

p. 204. "Left me free to pursue the course which I had always resolved upon, and to put self-interest completely out of the question, in concurring with the other friends of Lord Byron in a step thought so necessary to his own fame and the feelings of those he left behind him."

p. 196. "A measure considered essential to the reputation of my friend."

p. 188. Mr. Hobhouse and Douglas Kinnaird:—"The opinion of both Hobhouse and Kinnaird being that Mrs. Leigh would and ought to burn the manuscript altogether, without any previous perusal or deliberation."

p. 192. "Sir John Hobhouse wished it to be immediately destroyed, and the representatives of Mrs. Leigh expressed the same wish."

p. 192. Earl Russell:—"Having read the greater part, if not the whole, I should say that three or four pages of it were too gross and indelicate for publication; that the rest, with few exceptions, contained little

traces of Lord Byron's genius, and no interesting details of his life."

If the substance of the three or four pages mentioned by Lord Russell is contained in the first number of the 'John Bull Magazine,' they were infamous. John Wilson had seen the Memoirs. 'Blackwood's Magazine,' which he edited, in giving a sharp rebuke to the writer in 'John Bull' allowed his story of the obnoxious chapter to be genuine. Moore, having been told that people believed in it, evaded downright contradiction, saying—"People will believe anything;" a form of words that would hardly have been used if he could have denied the report.

1824. 'John Bull Magazine,' pp. 19 to 21. 'Blackwood,' Aug., 1824, pp. 115, 116.

Russell's 'Life of Moore,' vol. iv. p. 212.

Such was the book which a husband is praised for having offered to his wife's perusal, a book which the determinate will of Hobhouse, sorely against Mr. Moore's desire, destroyed, as fatal to Lord Byron's reputation. In the year 1824, 'Blackwood' declared that the Memoirs proclaimed the great poet to be the worst of bad men; now, the same authority regards their destruction as a crime committed from honourable motives, a most lamentable error, imagining that they might have shown something favourable to him and injurious to Lady Byron. They did but fill up the outline which Moore has drawn, and were destroyed for Lord Byron's sake, with open neglect of his wife's wishes and feelings. She was permitted to offer

August, p. 115.

1869, July, p. 32.

the price of burning them, but was refused a voice upon the question whether they should be burned or preserved.

1824, May 14. No sooner did Moore hear of Lord Byron's death, than, recollecting what he called the unfinished state of his agreement for the redemption of the Memoirs, he hastened to Murray, for whom he left a note desiring to know when it would be convenient to complete what had been agreed at their last meeting. Murray avoided him, and, through Wilmot Horton, who on this occasion represented Mrs. Leigh, promised to place the manuscript at the

May 15. disposal of Lord Byron's family. On the next day, Moore went to Hobhouse and Douglas Kinnaird, who informed him that Lady Byron would repay Murray. This he would not allow. He said that whatever was done must be done by him, he ought to pay the money, and he alone had a right over the manuscript, which he would redeem, and submit, not to Lady Byron, but to a chosen number of persons, and if they thought it altogether unfit for publication it should be burned. Hobhouse allowed that, without treachery to Lord Byron's intentions and wishes, the Memoirs could not be placed at the disposal of Lady Byron; but he would not be convinced when Moore argued that it would be unjust to the memory of their friend to destroy without perusal or deliberation. He insisted that they should be, and ought to be, altogether and

immediately burned, and Douglas Kinnaird was of the same opinion. Moore was helpless, for Murray had placed the manuscript in the power of Lord Byron's family. Not relying upon his imaginary power to repurchase, he protested that he had undertaken a trust which he was bound to perform, and could not perform without reclaiming the manuscript. Hobhouse assured him that, in answer to remonstrances on the impropriety of putting such a document out of his own power, Lord Byron had expressed regret for having done so, declaring that delicacy towards Moore alone prevented him from recalling the gift. The inference was, that in compliance with his last wish the Memoirs ought to be in the hands of his representatives. Moore, who, until the act was done, never supposed that if he were allowed to pay the money the manuscript would be destroyed, brought himself to believe that he had received the gift as a trust to be returned to Lord Byron, or his representatives, on demand; and that he had committed a grievous error in placing it out of his own power. It may be, that he could not, with honour, allow Lady Byron to repay Murray, because he ought not to have sold for publication a gift which could not be published without dishonour to the giver. That was the grievous error. He had not been guilty of a breach of trust. He had undertaken to correct and to publish, not to deliver to those whose intention was

to suppress. The sale to Murray was suggested by Lord Byron, and accomplished under his influence, and then, excepting the engagement to edit the work, the trust was at an end. The price had not been hoarded, but used for the purpose for which it was given — to discharge a debt. Lord Byron could not have asked Moore to repurchase the gift without infinite meanness and injustice, and Hobhouse should not have made him writhe under an obligation by repeating what had been learned in confidence, and was probably said merely to silence his remonstrances. Such words had no more weight than Moore's intention to repurchase while Lord Byron was yet alive. However, it being certain that if Lady Byron paid the money, Hobhouse would destroy the Memoirs, Moore declared that it should be paid by himself, and that the manuscript, when in his power, should be placed in the hands of Mrs. Leigh, to be disposed of as she should think proper. Then, Hobhouse and Kinnaird asked him, in direct words, whether he consented to meet Murray at Mrs. Leigh's rooms on the day next but one, and there, paying the two thousand guineas, to give the manuscript to Mrs. Leigh to be burned. He answered, as to the burning, that was her affair, all the rest he would willingly do. This promise was written down by Kinnaird, and so the door to any future dispute, delay, or hesitation on Moore's part was closed. He went from this meeting to

Longmans, who, in their desire to get possession of a book for which the world was looking with eager curiosity, readily agreed to lend him the money which was to be paid to Murray. He must still have reckoned, confidently, that he should save the Memoirs, for Longmans would not have lent the money unless they had felt secure of the manuscript.

Mrs. Leigh and Lady Byron, as yet friends, were working together for one common purpose—to save Lord Byron's name from disgrace. Wilmot Horton, who had confronted Hobhouse on the separation, now acted for Mrs. Leigh, and Colonel Doyle for Lady Byron. Moore had refused to allow any interference on Lady Byron's part; but now that Hobhouse and Kinnaird, one the executor, both the special friends of Lord Byron, were against him, he turned to her friends; and was willing not only that Wilmot Horton should be present for Mrs. Leigh at the decisive meeting, but that Colonel Doyle also should be there to represent Lady Byron. Hobhouse seems to have been more consistent. Lady Byron might pay the money, but she should have no power over the manuscript. The difficulty was evaded. Both were allowed to appear, but each as the minister of Mrs. Leigh, on whose behalf they were to determine whether the Memoirs should be preserved or destroyed. Moore went to Wilmot Horton, told the history of the manuscript, and argued that it would be cruel injustice to Byron's

'Quarterly,' January, 1870, p. 230.

October, 1869, p. 418.

1824, May 16.

memory to condemn the work without opening it, as if it were a pest-bag; all that could be wished would be gained by preserving only what was harmless and creditable. Wilmot Horton was convinced, and said that he meant to propose the same thing. It was agreed that the place of meeting should be changed to Murray's office, that Mrs. Leigh should not be personally present, and that after the money had been repaid by Moore the Memoirs should be placed in the hands of a banker, to await a final decision. Moore went to rest, in full assurance that they were his own.

May 17. Earl Russell has refrained from publishing Moore's report of the meeting, at which Kinnaird was not present. He says that it was a painful scene. What happened may be supposed without much danger of mistake. Moore, bearing the rival publisher's money, and secure of Wilmot Horton's judgment, could not be doubtful of the event. But the stronger will of Hobhouse prevailed. He had no thought but for his friend's reputation. Careless of the future censure of a foul curiosity baulked, he condemned, without reservation, the work which Gifford, whose delicacy was altogether masculine, and upon whose judgment Lord Byron had been accustomed to rely implicitly, pronounced too gross for publication. It did not become Mrs. Leigh's representatives to search whether some wholesome morsels might be found in a thing rotten to the

core. The most scrupulous regard to Moore's claims was satisfied by Lady Byron's offer to pay the money. In any case, he could not have saved the manuscript, which had become the absolute property of Murray, by whom it had been placed in Mrs. Leigh's power. Moore might argue that it had been sold upon the faith that it would be published under his correction, and if Murray would not publish he ought to return it. Hobhouse had an answer to which there was no reply—the groundless confession of a trust for Lord Byron's representatives, and the promise to deliver up the trust to them. What Moore had never foreseen happened. His borrowed money was taken from him; for in order to get possession he had protested that Lady Byron should not, and that he would, pay, and the Memoirs were burned before his face. Unless Murray was the most good-natured of men, he could scarcely have forborne to smile inwardly at the conclusion of the plot to take away his supremacy among booksellers. He had his money—Moore lost it—Longmans lent it without security—and the manuscript was burned.

After these things Wilmot Horton and Hobhouse repeatedly urged Moore to take Lady Byron's money, and many noble and honourable friends counselled him to accept the offer; but when they came to reason together they were fain to confess, although there was no such trust as he fancied, that

he could not, without disgrace, take money from his friend's widow for the suppression of a book injurious to the husband's fame. He did, in his heart, hope that, through the mediation of Lord Lansdowne and Rogers, the money might be settled on his family without his knowledge; a hope hardly consistent with the high point of honour. Yet, perhaps, few men in his circumstances would have had any scruple at all, and the good humour with which he bore a loss that seemed fraught with ruin was exemplary. In the end, Murray gave him four thousand guineas for a life of Byron, and Longmans' debt was discharged.

1828. Russell, vol. v. pp. 259 to 262, 268.

In what was Lady Byron to blame? She was not permitted to have a voice in that which so nearly concerned her. Her friend Wilmot Horton desired that the manuscript should be corrected and preserved. Was it a fault that she was ready to pay a great price for the suppression of the tainted parts of a book which her husband's supreme authority, Gifford, and his best friend, Hobhouse —no dishonourable foe, but not her friend—condemned as fatal to Lord Byron's reputation? No one can seriously believe that he who in 1816 had racked his imagination in Lord Byron's defence, would have consented to suppress, would have demanded the suppression of one sentence that impeached the truth of Lady Byron's complaint to Dr. Lushington.

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, pp. 418, 565.

After the destruction of the Memoirs, signs appeared of some secret cause of aversion from writing a life of Lord Byron. Lord Russell wrote to Moore:—"Do not undertake the life of another reprobate. In short, do anything but write the life of Lord Byron," and Moore acquiesced, with the sad comment:—"The only work that would enable me to surmount my difficulties is that which (*with too much reason*) all are against my undertaking." He had, long before, entertained the same thought. He told Lord Lansdowne that Longmans looked earnestly and anxiously to a life of Lord Byron as the great source of his means to repay them; and that, indeed, it would be the shortest and easiest way, yet the subject began to be so tarnished and clogged with difficulties that, according to his own impression, confirmed by Lord Lansdowne, it ought not to be undertaken by him.

1826. Russell, vol. v. p. 51.

1824. vol. iv. p. 253.

Although Hobhouse wavered from time to time —for his good nature led him to help Moore to rise above the difficulties under which even his buoyant spirit almost sank—it is plain that he would gladly have suppressed the 'Life' as well as the Memoirs. He saw no good to come from the 'Life'—he had a plan which might enable Moore to abandon his design—yet he advised that if the 'Life' were written it should consist as much as possible of Lord Byron's letters and journals. He knew what they contained from September 1813 to October

vol. v, pp. 18, 38, 109, 154.

pp. 40, 41, 66, 71, 76, 234, 238, 257.

1814, from 1816 to 1819. What worse could have been, unwittingly, disclosed? Knowing how much Moore knew, what could Hobhouse mean by the words, remarkable as coming from "a deeply and affectionately attached friend," the friend who had acted for Lord Byron in the separation:—"I know more of B—— than any one else, and much more than I should wish anybody else to know"? What was the dark reason that, according to Walter Scott, constrained Hobhouse to demand, not the mere blotting out whatever was calumnious or unclean, but a total destruction of the manuscript. "It was a pity," said Sir Walter, "that nothing save the total destruction of Byron's Memoirs would satisfy his executors. But there was a reason—*Premat nox alta.*" Was it that Hobhouse, who knew so much more than he wished to be known, perceived, beside the open shame, thoughts that ran —through—through—as yet impenetrable to others, but which might one day be discovered?

1822. vol. iii. p. 347.

Lockhart's 'Scott,' vol. viii. p. 116.

Moore, Dec. 10, 1819.

January 2, 1820. vol. iv. pp. 270, 272. 'Blackwood,' July, 1869, pp. 32, 33.

The letters which passed between Lord and Lady Byron upon the expression of his wish that she would see the Memoirs, prove, beyond doubt, that there was no mystery hidden *from him.* On the 10th of March, 1820, she wrote: "I decline to inspect it. I consider the publication or circulation of such a composition at any time as prejudicial to Ada's future happiness. For my own sake I have no reason to shrink from publication; but, notwith-

standing the injuries which I have suffered, I should lament some of the *consequences*." It should be remembered that in this very month he wrote the unpublished pamphlet in which he declared that his whole desire had ever been to obtain a specific charge in a tangible shape; that he had never been favoured with an act of accusation; that he had been accused of every monstrous vice; that if what was whispered was true he was unfit for England. Here was a letter from his wife, which could not have been more happily worded, if it had been written for the purpose of leading him to ask that his long desire might be satisfied. She strove to avert the publication as injurious to their daughter's future happiness. She spoke of her own wrongs. Is it possible, if he had not known the secret cause, and, conscious that there were no other than the ordinary causes of separation, had desired to know it, that he would not have reminded her of the prejudice which Ada must suffer from those atrocities of public rumour which her mother could extinguish with a breath, that he would not have challenged Lady Byron to name that special wrong which she hinted? He received her letter seventeen days after the date of the pamphlet, and answered it on the following day. Thus he wrote: "I could answer you; but it is too late, and it is not worth while. To the mysterious menace of the last sentence, whatever its import may be—and I cannot

1820. April 2. 'Blackwood,' p. 33.

pretend to unriddle it—I could hardly be very sensible, even if I understood it, as before it can take place I shall be 'where nothing can touch him further.'" The Memoir would not be published until after his death, therefore the consequence of publication—that is, the possible disclosure of the secret—could not touch *him*. Was this the fit answer of a man who had appealed to the Almighty for the sincerity of his desire to know of what he was accused?

'Blackwood,' p. 30. "The cruel silence," it is said, "was persevered in until Byron was in his grave. Then, and not till then, was it broken."

Moore, vol. vi. pp. 275, 280. But we are not told a word of the disgraceful light in which the conduct of Lady Byron's father and mother had been placed by the publication of her husband's letters, and the remarks of his biographer; not a word of her declared motive to absolve them from having originated, instigated, or advised the separation—to vindicate *their* memory from insult, and to take the responsibility and the odium *upon herself only*. She did *not* preserve a cruel silence during his life. To the world she kept a merciful silence. There was nothing to tell him that he did not know. Yet she wrote him a parting letter, in which she gave a promise which was precious to him, and precepts which were disagreeable. The deliberate insults of Thomas Moore, the revelation of her husband's weariness, disgust, and

hatred, did not tempt her to breathe a bitter word upon his memory. And, after all, she did *not* reveal the secret after his death, nor was she knowingly the cause of its being revealed. With the perfect truth that was her attribute, she wrote:—"Self-vindication is not the motive which actuates me to make this appeal, and the spirit of accusation is unmingled with it; but when the conduct of my parents is brought forward in a disgraceful light, by the passages selected from Lord Byron's letters, and by the remarks of his biographer, I feel bound to justify their characters from imputations which I *know* to be false.* I have only to observe, that if the statements on which my legal advisers (the late Sir Samuel Romilly and Dr. Lushington) formed their opinions were false, the responsibility and the odium should rest with me only. My parents neither originated, instigated, nor advised that separation."

* She must have read the aspersions on her mother with a bitter sense of her husband's ingratitude. "My mother," she says, "had always treated him with an affectionate consideration and indulgence, which extended to every little peculiarity of his feelings. Never did an irritating word escape her lips in her whole intercourse with him" (vol. vi. p. 278). He, indeed, tells another story: "Her mother always detested me, and had not even the decency to conceal it in her house" (vol. xv. p. 124, *note*). These, however, were mobile imaginations, hardly consistent with the impressions which he received while he was yet in the house. He wrote to Moore the day before he left Seaham, after a six weeks' visit: "I have been very comfortable here. They have been very kind and hospitable, and I like them and the place vastly" (March 8, 1815, vol. iii. p. 154).

In her own part of the remarks there is not a syllable of reproach, nothing from which the cause of separation could be guessed; nor did she perceive the inference to be drawn from the concluding words in Dr. Lushington's letter, which have their force from his personal and professional character: "I could not, either professionally or otherwise, take any part towards effecting it." Like Harry Bertram's likeness to his father, the inference cannot be denied when it is pointed out; but it is in the highest degree improbable that it was perceived by Lady Byron, bent as she was on showing that her mother could not have been actuated by any hostile or ungenerous motive. She had told him that "her duty both to God and man required such conduct," and Dr. Lushington said no more.

'Quarterly Review,' January, 1870, p. 234.

In the early part of the year 1816, Mrs. Leigh, acting under the direction of her brother, endeavoured to dissuade Lady Byron from proceeding at law for a divorce, because she would have to appear in court, and without other witnesses her evidence would go for nothing, nor could the testimony of those who repeated after her be received. If it had been, then, pretended that she was guilty of a crime the wickedness of which can hardly be aggravated, the crime of falsely accusing her husband of an offence which made it impossible that she should return to him, it could not have entered into the mind of the husband, or of his sister, to

reason calmly upon the difficulty of proof in a court of law. The answer would have been given by the indignant defiance: "You know the accusation to be false;" not by the warning: "You cannot prove it by such evidence as the law requires." The 'Quarterly Review', with seeming consciousness of the guilt, repeatedly alludes to this want of legal evidence. Lady Byron, warned that she could not prove the charge which, of her own knowledge, was true, insisted, at all hazards, upon the separation which duty to God and man demanded. Lord Byron, after a refusal to separate, given in the most absolute terms, instead of standing firm to repel the charge which tainted his name, yielded, and went into exile.

pp. 245, 246.

When he spoke to Lady Blessington of his earnest desire to forgive and be forgiven, his words plainly absolved his wife from having invented the accusation by which his name was tainted. It was not her *falsehood*, but her *consistency*, he feared. He would have returned to England, but was held back by the fear that his enemies would awake with renewed energy to assail and blacken him; and that Lady Byron would preserve her *consistency* and refuse to be reconciled.

Lady Blessington, pp. 400 to 403.

In 'Blackwood's' story of the separation, the ignorance of the wife's innocence, and her husband's allowance that she really did believe him to be mad

Moore, vol. iii. pp. 222, 287.

are unnoticed.* In the following statement all that is necessary to justify Lady Byron rests upon unanswerable proof, and anything added to explain what might otherwise seem mysterious, upon strong probability.

vol. vi. p. 277. During her married life she suffered many wrongs from her husband, and among them, that which was the final cause of separation. She was ignorant of guilt. "My copyist would write out anything I desired, in all the ignorance of innocence," said her husband, twelve days before she left him. According to his own testimony, she believed that he was mad. "I have no doubt," he would sometimes say, "that she really did believe me to be mad." It was represented to her that he was in danger of destroying himself. With the concurrence of his family she consulted Dr. Baillie, the physician who had attended him in his boyhood. In all this it can hardly be affirmed, seriously, that she did more or less than a wife's duty. At Lord Byron's absolute desire, signified to her in writing, she left London for her father's house at Kirkby-Mallory, on the 15th of January, and, by Dr. Baillie's advice, wrote two kind and cheerful letters to her husband. She gives the following reason for

1816. January 3. vol. iii. p. 222. p. 287.

vol. i. p. 44.

* The positive assertion that Dr. Baillie never saw Lord Byron, and did not pronounce a positive opinion, is a mistake, but immaterial ('Blackwood,' p. 30; Moore, vol. xv. p. 124; note to 'Don Juan,' canto i. stanza 27).

having written them:—"Whatever might have been the nature of Lord Byron's conduct towards me from the time of my marriage, yet, supposing him to be in a state of mental alienation, it was not for *me*, nor for any person of common humanity, to manifest, at that moment, a sense of injury." Her mother wrote immediately to invite him to Kirkby-Mallory. The daughter—who had taken care to have intelligence of her husband—received from his medical attendant, and the persons in constant intercourse with him, reports which strengthened doubts that had already passed across her mind, whether he really was insane. During the last two miserable months of her stay in her husband's house, Mrs. Clermont,* who had been her governess and was her friend—"the genial confidante" of the 'Sketch,' the lady whom Byron supposed to be the occult cause of the separation, which he attributed to her ill-natured interposition—was a witness of his frantic desperation. It is not unlikely that in those months Lady Byron was taught that some act of her husband, which she had ascribed to madness, was a grave offence. It is certain she resolved that, unless his conduct had the excuse of insanity, she would not return. There were other sufficient causes of separation, and it is not hard

* It is said that during these last two months Mrs. Clermont was in London with Lady Byron, but that she did not accompany her to Kirkby-Mallory ('Quarterly,' January, 1870, pp. 222, 235).

to understand why, unless in extreme necessity, she would not reveal the moral impulse even to her mother. Sixteen evidences, either of insanity or of right to separation, were prepared, and of these her husband was afterwards informed. She found that he was not insane, and was advised that, although the things which she had declared entitled her to divorce, she ought to be reconciled. In this extremity she revealed the cause for which Dr. Lushington pronounced that reconciliation was impossible. It was probably from him she learned that the sentence was irrevocable. Separation was proposed. "Lord Byron at first rejected this proposal, but, when it was distinctly notified to him that if he persisted in his refusal recourse must be had to legal measures, he agreed to sign a deed of separation."

vol. vi. p. 279. vol. v. pp. 234 to 236. vol. xv. pp. 124, 126, 127.

Lord Byron's belief that the offence had been disclosed to Mrs. Clermont, and that she had taught its true quality, explains his malignant rage against her in the 'Sketch.' What would be done to a man of the lower order of mind who should seek out a lady, his wife's friend, with whom he had lived on equal terms in the house of his wife's father, to tell her,—that she had been born in the garret, and bred in the kitchen,—raised to the table, to dine from off the plate she had lately washed while her wondering betters waited behind her chair,—that she was a liar and a spy, a viper, a hag of hatred,

vol. x. p. 119.

and a Hecate,—a hideous crust, with a cheek of parchment in which her muddy and yellow blood stagnated,—a centipede,—a scorpion,—a reptile,—a monster,—a female dog-star,—a wretch without a tear,—a loathsome leper, doomed, while she wearied Heaven with supplications, to go down to the dust in despair, poisoning the worms that fed upon her? All this Lord Byron said to Mrs. Clermont aloud, before the whole world, and he said it deliberately. On the day after his verses were written, he sent a second draft to Mr. Murray, that they might be printed for private distribution, and, three days afterwards, desired him to make a correction for the press. Moore owns that the 'Sketch' was justly condemned, and he himself condemns it—*because* it was *undignified*, and *exalted* "an obscure female whose situation ought to have placed her 'beneath" my lord's satire. These men of the higher order of mind claim high privileges. Sex is so far from being a defence against them, that it seems to invite assault. The possession of the intellectual might of the devil himself would not excuse such arrogant affectation of superiority. Mrs. Leigh, Lord Byron's sister, had other thoughts of Mrs. Clermont, and wrote to her, offering public testimony to her tenderness and forbearance under circumstances which must have been trying to any friend of Lady Byron.

'Life and Works,' vol. x. pp. 189, 192.

vol. iii. p. 229.

Campbell, 'New Monthly Magazine,' April 1830, p. 380.

It is insinuated that Lady Byron did not speak

'Blackwood,' p. 30.

the truth when she professed that she had consulted Dr. Baillie with the concurrence of her husband's family. We are asked, who were the "family," who "the nearest relatives," who "the relations" whom she consulted? Laying it down that Mrs. Leigh was the only person who could properly be called "the family," we are told that her subsequent conduct negatives in the strongest manner the suggestion that she could have concurred. As "to relatives," which might no doubt include cousins, after a careful examination of the correspondence which took place at the time,* their presence cannot be traced. It is then supposed to have been proved that neither Mrs. Leigh nor the cousins concurred; we are asked—"To whom, then, does Lady Byron allude?"

By Lord Byron's acknowledgment, his wife thought him mad, and, unless she had wished him to die by his own hand, she must needs consult a physician. Many persons were living who, if she had spoken falsely, could have convicted her. Mrs. Leigh, through whom she communicated with her husband after the separation, and at least one of the cousins, survived him. We may not condemn a

Moore, vol. iv. p. 286. vol. vi. p. 30.

* The concurrence of the family would hardly appear in the letters of Byron and Moore. If the letters of Lady Byron, Mrs. Leigh, and the cousins were examined, and nothing found, it might be that the consults were not by letter, or that letters were destroyed. Sane persons do not love to learn that their relations have suspected them to be mad.

person of Lady Byron's character for truth, telling of things within her own knowledge, and certain of detection if she spoke falsely, upon bare suspicion.

The consultation with Dr. Lushington is denounced as the groundwork of a monstrous condemnation, revolting to every principle of justice and common sense. It is assumed that the charge was false, and, it being beyond dispute that there was a consultation, Lady Byron, because she held it, is condemned as a slanderer, the subtle murderer of her husband's fame—far more guilty than if she had told a bold falsehood. With all this, it is meant to deal tenderly with her. It is the tenderness of the devil's advocate, who extenuates the cruelty of the tyrant, and reviles the memory of the martyr. 'Blackwood,' pp. 31, 32.

The consultation and its result are thus described:—

"Failing with Dr. Lushington, as she had with Dr. Baillie, she seeks a personal interview, and then, in the secrecy of his chambers, under the seal of a confidence stricter than that of the confessional, she imparts to him *something* which he was bound to assume on her sole assurance to be true; which he was, without investigation or inquiry, to accept as the basis of his opinion; which he was, under no circumstances whatever, without her express authority (an authority which death has now put it out of her power to give) to divulge—upon which she obtains his opinion that a reconciliation was im-

possible. What that something was we shall probably never know; but, save in the case of the victims who were sent to the guillotine on suspicion of being suspected, we know no condemnation so monstrous, so revolting to every principle of justice and common sense, as that which has been passed on Lord Byron."

Let it be supposed, as will be presently proved, that Lady Byron spoke the truth to her advocate; and the argument, if it be good for anything, will prevent every person who has suffered wrong from seeking advice. A "victim sent to the guillotine on suspicion of being suspected," a "monstrous and revolting condemnation," are brave words; but what business have they here? The opinion of an advocate is not a condemnation, nor is an English court of justice a revolutionary tribunal, from whose jurisdiction it behoves an accused person to escape. Lord Byron condemned himself. He did not dare even to hear the charge before the judgment-seat. True, he was unjustly condemned beforehand by the public voice. Such prejudgment is sometimes alleged as a reason for delay, but was never yet brought forward as a reason for avoiding a trial altogether. Supposing him to have been innocent, if ever there was a case in which public rumour should have been defied in open court, it was his. He was not depressed, he was not to be beaten down by the world or its inheritors—he was excited

by contest and defiance—he was not of a nature to be much affected by men's anger—he and his vigorous friends went about seeking a fair pretext for a duel, that he might slay some one, any one, who had repeated the rumours against him. He boasts that he stood at bay in Venice; he should have stood at bay in London. When the question came whether he should hear his wife's charge in a court of law, or consent to a separation, he consented and fled.

Moore, vol. iii. pp. 201, 205, 229, 358. vol. iv. p. 109. vol. v. p. 247. vol. xv. p. 67.

And we are to suppose that the charge was false, —an invention, not of a student of the gloomy sequestration of Tiberius, but of a woman the very mirror of truth, serenely purest of her sex, ignorant of guilt, innocent as a child. The imagination that she spoke falsely never entered her husband's mind. Had it been there, it would have found vent in his letters, or in 'Don Juan.'

He knew that his wife had made an accusation against him by which his name was tainted; he knew that she loved him, that he had dealt harshly by her, that she was ignorantly innocent, but governed by fixed rules and principles, to which, if duty required, she could not choose but sacrifice the happiness of her whole life. If her accusation were true, even he might have some pity for her; his anger would fall upon those by whom her ignorance had been enlightened. But, if it were false? A more loathsome accumulation of crime can hardly

be conceived—defilement, treachery, falsehood, and cruelty mingled in one foul cauldron. It would be infamy to touch such an accuser. And the wrong heaped upon him!—a proud man, of fierce passions and tyrannous will, cast down from a height which those not of his time can scarcely conceive, and grovelling at the foot of his pedestal, the scorn of creatures upon whom he had looked with such supreme superiority; and we are to persuade ourselves that although she persisted in her guilt, and refused to set him free from its baleful consequences, he besought her to return with words of touching tenderness; and to the end of his life, while he hardened his hatred against her, in the schools in which men most surely learn to be cruel to women and children, he never breathed the shadow of a doubt upon her truth.* It is needless to multiply phrases. She is to be absolved by his own words, spoken and written after the separation:—

March, 1816. The letters to Rogers and Moore, in which he holds her blameless.

The 'Farewell,' in which he passionately laments the separation, declares undying love for her, and protests that, though she were unforgiving, his heart would never rebel against her.

* The verses on hearing that she was ill are not considered as an exception. They were not published during his life. They seem to allude to the sixteen articles of complaint, followed by the seventeenth (vol. x. p. 209). He gave a copy to Lady Blessington ('Conversations,' p. 80).

The 'Sketch,' in which he portrays her as a miracle of truth and purity, exempt from perversion.

"Lord Byron, who was, to the last, disposed to reconciliation." Moore, vol. iii. p. 213.

At Geneva, he invariably spoke of her with kindness and regret, imputing the course she had taken in leaving him, not to herself, but to others. July. p. 287.

He wrote "a letter to a friend in England, declaring himself still willing to be reconciled to Lady Byron." p. 286.

In a letter to Lady Byron, dated 17th November, 1821, which he did not send, he wrote: "I considered our reunion as not impossible for more than a year after our separation." vol. vi. p. 31. Nov. 17, 1821.

"I also thank you for the inscription of the date and name, and I will tell you why: I believe that they are the only two or three words of your handwriting in my possession. For your letters I returned, and except the two words, or rather the one word 'household,' written twice in an old account-book, I have no other. I burnt your last note for two reasons: firstly, it was written in a style not very agreeable; *and, secondly, I wished to take your word without documents, which are the worldly resources of suspicious people.* p. 30.

"Every day which keeps us asunder should, after so long a period, rather soften our mutual feelings." p. 31

"On all the few points of discussion which can

arise between us, we should preserve the courtesies of life, and as much of its kindness as people who are never to meet may preserve, perhaps more easily than nearer connections. For my own part, I am violent, but not malignant; for only fresh provocations can awaken my resentment. *To you, who are colder and more concentrated, I would just hint, that you may sometimes mistake the depth of a cold anger for dignity, and a worse feeling for duty.*"

vol. x. p. 183. Mr. Kennedy, in his account of Lord Byron's first residence in Cephalonia, represents him as saying: "Lady Byron deserves every respect from me. I do not indeed know the cause of separation, and I have remained, and ever will remain, ready for a reconciliation whenever circumstances open and point out the way to it."

1819. vol. iv. pp. 213, 219. "Of his wife he spoke with much respect and affection. He said she was an illustrious lady, distinguished for the qualities of her heart and understanding, and that all the fault of their cruel separation lay with himself."

1823. April. 'Conversations of Lord Byron with the Countess of Blessington,' pp. 23, 89, 109, 316. "When Lord Byron was praising the mental and personal qualifications of Lady Byron, I asked him how all that he now said agreed with certain sarcasms supposed to bear a reference to her, in his works. He smiled, shook his head, and said they were meant to spite and vex her, when he was wounded and wretched at her refusing to receive or answer his letters; that he was not sincere in his

implied censures, and that he was sorry he had written them;" "he allowed it was petty and unworthy of him."

"He said that if my portrait of Lady Byron's position were indeed a faithful one, she was much more to be pitied than he; that he felt deeply for her, but that he had never viewed their relative situations in the same light before; he had always considered her as governed wholly by pride."

"No marriage could have turned out more unfortunately than the one I made—that is quite certain; and to add to my agreeable reflections on this subject, I have the consciousness that had I possessed sufficient command over my own wayward humour, I might have rendered myself so dear and necessary to Lady Byron, that she would not, could not have left me."

"This extraordinary degree of self-command in Lady Byron produced an opposite effect on me. When I have broken out, on slight provocations, into one of my ungovernable fits of rage, her calmness piqued and seemed to reproach me; it gave her an air of superiority that vexed and increased my *mauvaise humeur*. I am now older and wiser, and should know how to appreciate her conduct as it deserved."

Letter to the Countess of Blessington, enclosing the letter of the 17th of November, 1821, addressed to Lady Byron:— May 6, 1823. vol. vi. p. 29.

"The letter which I enclose I was prevented from sending by my despair of doing any good. I was perfectly sincere when I wrote it, and am so still. But it is difficult for me to withstand the thousand provocations on that subject, which both friends and foes have for seven years been throwing in the way of a man whose feelings were once quick, and whose temper was never patient. *But 'returning were as tedious as go o'er,' I feel this as much as ever Macbeth did; and it is a dreary sensation, which at least avenges the real or imaginary wrongs of one of the two unfortunate persons whom it concerns.*"

Enough has been shown to satisfy the most exacting judge that Lord Byron had suffered no such wrong as is pretended by 'Blackwood.' Could the husband have dwelt upon wrongs suffered by the wife, real or imaginary, if she had been guilty of the crime imputed to her? Could he have lamented that, like Macbeth, he had gone too far to return again? Could he have applied to her the epithet "unfortunate," and declared that her wrongs had been avenged?

1830. March. Lord Russell, vol. vi. p. 111.

And in Moore's Journal, published by Lord Russell, we have no less sure testimony to her truth. By her desire, Lord Holland sent to Moore a printed copy of the remarks, which showed that she had complained to Dr. Lushington of some offence that, in his judgment, made reconciliation impossible. If Moore had disbelieved her, surely he would have

given a denial as public as the charge, or at least some sign of his disbelief must have appeared in his journal. There is no such sign. He says that he wrote to Lord Holland offering, with Lady Byron's permission, to subjoin her remarks to the second edition of his work. Not a word more. Lord Holland returned a most flattering reply, praising his good humour and good judgment. Was Moore so false a guardian of his friend's name as to confirm the accusation by this most expressive silence? Was Lord Holland a man to praise the good humour and the prudence of such friendship, if the friend could have safely said or implied that Lady Byron was false, or had been deceived? This is not all. Thomas Campbell in his observations on the remarks published in the 'New Monthly Magazine,' thus addressed Mr. Moore:—

"I found my right to speak on this painful subject on its now *irrevocable publicity*, brought up afresh as it has been by Mr. Moore, to be the theme of discourse to millions, and, if I err not much, the cause of misconception to innumerable minds." 1830. April. 'New Monthly Magazine,' Mrs. Stowe, p. 84.*

"This production has virtually dragged her forward from the shade of retirement, where she had hid her sorrows, and compelled her to defend the heads of her friends and her parents from being crushed under the tombstone of Byron." "To plenary

* The 'Observations' have been read in the Magazine, but are cited from Mrs. Stowe's 'History' as more accessible.

explanation she *ought* not — she never *shall* be driven. Mr. Moore is too much a gentleman not to shudder at the thought of that; but if other Byronists, of a far different stamp, were to force the savage ordeal, it is her enemies, and not she, that would have to dread the burning ploughshares."

"It concerns morality and the most sacred rights of the sex, that she should (and that, too, without more special explanations), be acquitted out and out, and honourably acquitted in this business of all share in the blame, which is one and indivisible. Mr. Moore, on further reflection, may see this; and his return to candour will surprise us less than his momentary deviation from the path."

"If indelicacy be charged upon me, I scorn the charge. Neither will I submit to be called Lord Byron's accuser; because a word against him I wish not to say beyond what is painfully wrung from me by the necessity of owning or illustrating Lady Byron's unblamableness, and of repelling certain misconceptions respecting her, which are now walking the fashionable world, and which have been fostered
p. 85. (though heaven knows where they were born) most delicately and warily by the Christian godfathership of Mr. Moore.

"I write not at Lady Byron's bidding. I have never humiliated either her or myself by asking *if* I should write, or *what* I should write; that is to

say, I never applied to her for information against Lord Byron, though I was justified, as one intending to criticise Mr. Moore, in inquiring into the truth of some of his statements. Neither will I suffer myself to be called her champion, if by that word be meant the advocate of her mere legal innocence; for that, I take it, nobody questions."

"I proceed to deal more generally with Mr. Moore's book. You speak, Mr. Moore, against Lord Byron's censurers in a tone of indignation which is perfectly lawful against calumnious traducers, but which will not terrify me or any other man of courage who is no calumniator, from uttering his mind freely with regard to this part of your hero's conduct. I question your philosophy in assuming p. 86. that all that is noble in Byron's poetry was inconsistent with the possibility of his being devoted to a pure and good woman; and I repudiate your morality for canting too complacently about 'the lava of his imagination,' and the unsettled fever of his passions."

"These are hard words, Mr. Moore; but you have brought them on yourself by your voluntary ignorance of facts known to me, for you might and ought to have known both sides of the question; and, if the subject was too delicate for you to consult Lady Byron's confidential friends, you ought to have had nothing to do with the subject. But you cannot have submitted your book even to Lord

Byron's sister, otherwise she would have set you right about the imaginary spy, Mrs. Clermont."

Campbell had asked Lady Byron for information, she answered:—

"Dear Mr. Campbell,—In taking up my pen to point out for your private information those passages in Mr. Moore's representation of my part of the story which were open to contradiction, I find them of still greater extent than I had supposed; and to deny an assertion *here and there* would virtually admit the truth of the rest. If, on the contrary, I were to enter into a full exposure of the falsehood of the views taken by Mr. Moore, I must detail various matters which, consistently with my principles and feelings, I cannot under the existing circumstances disclose. I may, perhaps, convince you better of the difficulty of the case by an example: It is not true that pecuniary embarrass-
p. 87. ments were the cause of the disturbed state of Lord Byron's mind, or formed the chief reason for the arrangements made by him at that time. But is it reasonable for me to expect that you or any one else should believe this, unless I show you what were the causes in question? and this I cannot do. I am, &c., A. J. Noel Byron."

Campbell proceeds:—

p. 88. "It is more for Lord Byron's sake than for his widow's that I resort not to a more special examination of Mr. Moore's misconceptions. The subject

would lead me insensibly into hateful disclosures against poor Lord Byron, who is more unfortunate in his rash defenders than in his reluctant accusers. Happily, his own candour turns our hostility from himself against his defenders. It was only in wayward and bitter remarks that he misrepresented Lady Byron. He would have defended himself irresistibly if Mr. Moore had left only his acknowledging passages. But Mr. Moore has produced a 'Life' of him which reflects blame on Lady Byron so dexterously that 'more is meant than meets the ear.' The almost universal impression produced by his book is, that Lady Byron must be a precise and a wan, unwarming spirit, a blue-stocking of chilblained learning, a piece of insensitive goodness."

"You said, Mr. Moore, that Lady Byron was unsuitable to her lord: the word is cunningly insidious, and may mean as much or as little as may suit your convenience. But if she was unsuitable, I remark that it tells all the worse against Lord Byron." p. 89.

To all this not one word of denial was uttered. Moore contented himself with describing the 'Observations,' in his Diary, as a rash and injudicious rhapsody. Campbell privately expressed sorrow for having written them, and asked to be forgiven. They often met afterwards as friends. It *was* injudicious to defend Lady Byron publicly in the character of her friend without authority; and the charges against Moore *were* rash. The great faults Lord Russell, vol. vi. p. 113; vol. vii. pp. 157, 373. vol. vi. pp. 213, 231, 232, 295; vol. vii. pp. 15, 16, 245.

of his work were the shameless display and extenuation of Lord Byron's low profligacy both before and after marriage, and the publication of the cruel things which he had written in secret. Of himself Moore had said as little against her as was consistent with the task that he had undertaken—the task of making it appear that there had been no unusual cause for separation. Campbell's rebuke to an old friend had been careless, and he frankly asked forgiveness. But it never entered into his mind to doubt the truth of the complaint made to Dr. Lushington, nor into Moore's to pretend that the aspersions were unjust. A rhapsody, an injudicious letter, a rash note, are dainty phrases, not suitable to a foul and malignant falsehood. In his single recollection of Lady Byron, after April, 1830, Moore thought of her, not as a false wife who had wronged his friend, but as the mother who had probably taught her child to think hardly of himself. He declined to appear as a mourner at Campbell's funeral because he would not recall to the world's memory, and seem to make an open confession of, the charges which he had not dared to contradict. In the weary Journal of his Life, from April, 1830, down to 1844, three times only does he allude to Lady Byron, or to Campbell's 'Observations,' and then he writes what he could not have written and leaves unwritten what he must have written if they had been guilty, the one of inventing,

the other of repeating, the slander which is now imputed to them.

"Lord Holland having told me of a letter which Lady Byron had sent that morning, upon the subject of Campbell's rhapsody, to Lord Melbourne, asked Lord M. after dinner whether he had any objection to show it me. 'On the contrary,' he said, and went upstairs to his room for it. In this note to Lord M. she expresses great regret at the 'injudiciousness' of what Campbell has done, though convinced it was very good-naturedly meant, and adding that she has known him a long time," &c., &c. 1830, April 1. vol. vi. p. 113.

Lady King asked me to meet her daughter-in-law, Ada, at dinner. "I own I should like to see her myself, though I am not so sure that her mamma may not have prepossessed her mind with prejudices against me, which might possibly render our meeting not very agreeable." 1835, Dec. 18. vol. vii. p. 157.

"I have not mentioned my having been summoned to town for the melancholy purpose of attending as one of the mourners at poor Campbell's funeral. Besides the painfulness of the task, it would have been very embarrassing to me in many ways, and I felt compelled to decline it. Poor Campbell! if I was to outlive both our spans of years, I could never forget the manfulness of the atonement he made to me for the rash letter published by him on the Byron affair. 'I ask you to 1844, July 5 to 7. p. 373.

forgive me,' were the closing words of his frank *amende*."

Lady Byron's letter to Lord Melbourne accords with her 'Remarks.' To justify her father and mother was a duty. She desired no defence for herself. The letter to Campbell marks the difference between two rights that she claimed, although she might not think fit to exercise them, the right of clearing herself to her friends, and the right of appealing to the world.

The character of Lady Byron may be summed up in a few words, taken from the letters and poems of her husband, and from his 'Life' by Thomas Moore. As a girl she was a pattern in her own country. During her one year of married life she was good, bright, kind, amiable, and agreeable—free from deceit, and of childlike purity. She concealed from her father and mother, and from the world, the wrongs that she suffered during that year; not a murmur escaped her. When she discovered that duty called her to separate from her husband, and for ever, she obeyed, and, notwithstanding provocation very hard to bear, kept unbroken silence. Four faults only are to be found in her whole life. She concealed her misery at home; she concealed the cause of the separation, the discovery of which would have destroyed her husband; she set up a Sunday-school; and she was the patroness of a charity ball. And this woman is held up as an

example of domestic malice, a poisonous slanderer, a moral Brinvilliers, whose life was monstrous, and her death the death of Cardinal Beaufort! Thus the Review concludes:—

"There is no proof whatever that Lord Byron was guilty of any act that need have caused a separation, or prevented a reunion, and the imputations upon him rest on the vaguest conjecture. Whatever real or fancied wrongs Lady Byron may have endured are shrouded in an impenetrable mist of her own creation—a poisonous miasma, in which she enveloped the character of her husband—raised by her breath, and which her breath only could have dispersed. 'Blackwood,' p. 33.

'She dies and makes no sign—O God, forgive her!'"

It is vain to contend against a champion who will persist to fight, not perceiving that he is dead. Were Lord Byron to rise from the grave, to testify that he alone was to blame, and his wife faultless, he could but iterate the proof which he has already given, and which is disregarded; and if it were reiterated a thousand times, those who will not believe would not believe. Still we should undergo Lord Peter's plain argument, with a diluted benediction, or the short method by which the Scottish doctor overthrew Bellarmine:—"Lord Byron says that his wife was not cold; that she was in the highest degree good, bright, beautiful, amiable,

agreeable, of childlike innocence, pure, and true; that he could never have any reproach to make against her; that where there was blame it belonged to him alone. Lord Byron says YES, but I say No; and, having thus confuted Lord Byron, let us proceed."

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS.

[*First published* 1st *December*, 1869.]

"Foil'd was Perversion by that youthful mind,
Which Flattery fool'd not—Baseness could not blind,
Deceit infect not—near Contagion soil—
Indulgence weaken—nor Example spoil—
* * * * * *
Serenely purest of her sex that live."

LORD BYRON, 29 March, 1816.

AMONG all the surprises in the controversy on the separation of Lord and Lady Byron, none is more surprising than that one of our two great champions of religion, as by law established, should find a charming picture, and inexpressibly touching, in the phantom of an aged lady, glowing, as she goes down to the grave, with fond recollections of the days when she gave herself, body and soul, to an absorbing and unlawful passion; and that the other should throw incense upon the moral character of Lord Byron for the purpose of promoting the sale of 'Don Juan.' The 'Quarterly Review' will not succeed in the attempt to persuade us to commend that poem to the favourable regard of our sons and daughters. For this time we will rather

Moore, vol. iv. p. 238.

listen to Thomas Moore, who is presented as the best possible interpreter. He told Lord Byron that the book was no less licentious than 'Little's Poems,' and more mischievous. He foretold that the unmanly allusions to Lady Byron would provoke disgust beyond endurance; that the systematised profligacy of the poem would not be borne. Hobhouse and Frere were of the same opinion.* It is beyond the power of art to make a family 'Don Juan,' and it is neither a kind nor a good deed to send the leper out of quarantine fumigated for family use. Time was when the 'Quarterly Review' would not have set its seal to that book. What would Robert Southey have said?

Lord Russell's 'Life of Moore,' vol. ii. pp. 264, 266, 329.

Nor can the means by which this warfare for the honour of 'Don Juan' is waged, be commended. In the depth of his shame, in the very torrent of his passion, Lord Byron never dared to impeach his wife's truth, nor, except in those vile passages in which he has found one follower, her childlike purity. Moore, who, according to the 'Quarterly Review,' had the best possible information, and was best qualified to interpret doubtful allusions in the

'Don Juan,' canto i. stanzas 51, 66, 68. 'Quarterly.' pp. 413, 434, 566.

* "30th January, 1819. Frere spoke to me about 'Don Juan.' Spoke of the disgust it would excite if published; the attacks in it upon Lady B.; and said it is strange, too, he should think there was any connection between patriotism and profligacy" (p. 264). 31st. "Went to breakfast with Hobhouse in order to read Lord Byron's poem"—"as a whole not publishable." "Hobhouse has undertaken the delicate task of letting him know our joint opinions" (page 266).

journals and letters, when he ventured to suggest that the mysterious cause of separation might be found in some imposture, fixed the falsehood, not on the wife, but on the husband. "It has sometimes occurred to me," he says, "that the occult cause of his lady's separation from him, round which herself and her legal adviser have thrown such formidable mystery, may have been nothing more, after all, than some imposture of this kind, some dimly-hinted confession of undefined horrors, which, though intended by the relater but to mystify and surprise, the hearer so little understood him as to take in sober seriousness." But the 'Quarterly Review' is bold enough to declare, that the woman whom deceit could not infect, the serenely pure, the innocent even to ignorance, forged a wicked lie, accusing her husband of some enormous crime, and stands self-convicted of a prolonged course of dissimulation and hypocrisy. The end will not be won. Even the sudden flash of the letters of January and February, 1816, written to Mrs. Leigh in words of sisterly affection, though it startles, will not astound reasoning men into belief of a moral impossibility. Those letters cannot be explained until *the whole truth*, which lies hidden and guarded at the bottom of the well, is sent forth. Meanwhile Lady Byron shall be justified; and in her husband's private journal and letters, and in his poems (in one of his poems, especially), shall be

Moore, vol. vi. p. 242.

'Quarterly,' p. 566.

'Quarterly,' pp. 414–415.

shown acknowledgment of the very crime that Mrs. Stowe's story has imputed to him.

pp. 407, 408, 412. The paper on 'The Byron Mystery,' published in the 'Quarterly Review' of October, was written on the assumption that the offence reported by Mrs. Stowe was that specific offence upon which Dr. Lushington declared reconciliation to be impossible.

pp. 418, 429. It is indeed shown that Campbell said, and Lord Wentworth has intimated, the contrary; but the

pp. 413, 426, 427. identity of the two accusations is repeatedly assumed. After that paper had been published, it was perhaps perceived, that the charge by which Lady Byron enforced separation, whatever it might have been, was true. In a postscript we are told that the

p. 564. opinion of the 'Quarterly Review' had been, and was, that the crime specified by Mrs. Stowe was *not* the substance of the final communication to Dr. Lushington. Yet still there seems a halt between the two opinions, a design to take advantage of the

p. 566. result, whatever it might be. It is added: "There is one particular in which all the published versions including Mrs. Beecher Stowe's agree, namely, that Lady Byron declared the guilty connection to be *the* cause of separation; that she virtually, therefore, declared it to be the substance of her final communication to Dr. Lushington." How can it be supposed, and without the suggestion of a motive, that Lady Byron, having named to Dr. Lushington one cause upon which she obtained the separation,

should have declared to several persons that some other was the true cause? The design is apparent. If *the* cause should hereafter be known, and probably it will be known, and should prove to be the guilty connection, then it will be argued—vainly argued, as will be shown presently—from the letters of January and February, 1816, that the accusation was false: if it should appear that the final communication told some other offence, then it will be said that Lady Byron declared the contrary to many persons, and is not worthy of belief. The evidence will be buried in the newspapers, and the 'Quarterly Review' accepted as a true report. But the published versions directly contradict the 'Review.' Neither Thomas Campbell, nor the young military man, nor Lord Lindsay, nor Lord Wentworth, nor Mr. Robertson, says that Lady Byron declared the crime charged by Mrs. Stowe to be the offence by which she enforced separation. Some of them say the very opposite. As to Mrs. Stowe, while she treats of that crime as the great cause of the misery of Lady Byron's married life, she does not refer to Dr. Lushington, nor to the enforced separation, but insists that the separation was the act, not of the wife, but of the husband, and chides him and Mr. Moore for dissimulation in pretending otherwise.* Still, it is prejudged that

pp. 418, 413. *Times*, Sept. 7, Sept. 11, copying from *Pall Mall.*

Pall Mall, Sept. 14 and 16. 'Macmillan,' Sept., pp. 380, 390.

'Quarterly.' p. 565.

* Since this was written, Mrs. Stowe, in her 'History,' has affirmed that Lady Byron declared the crime which she has pub-

Lady Byron shall be condemned. All methods are to be tried, all allies welcomed. Even Mrs. Stowe is invited to astonish the world by her ingratitude. First of all, Lady Byron was hard and unforgiving; she would not return to her husband. It was shown that, if she spoke truth to Dr. Lushington, she could not return. Next, she was accused of having invented an odious lie to set herself free. And now, after her truth and her purity have been established out of her husband's own mouth, we are asked to convict her of a long course of dissimulation and hypocrisy, upon the faith of uncertain conversations and selected letters. There will be no shrinking from this new encounter. But the new cause of complaint must not be confounded with those which came before. For, if it could be made to appear, and, all the evidence being in the hands of the adversary, it may be made to appear, though it be untrue, that the alleged statements of Lady Byron to Mrs. Stowe and others were false, it might be hastily inferred that there was no truth in her complaints against her husband. It is necessary well to understand the quality of this new accusation. It is not that Lady Byron wrote the letters; rather, they are the strong confirmation of her husband's testimony to her purity and truth. If

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lished to have been *the* cause. It will be shown in the Notes upon her book that Mrs. Stowe has deceived herself.

she had invented a false and cruel and foul calumny, fixing a taint upon his name, and driving him into banishment, is it possible that, at the very time, she could have lived, and could have continued afterwards to live, in close affection with the sister, his only consolation, his fountain in the desert? The accusation is not that she wrote the letters, but that, thirty or forty years after they had been written, speaking to her friends of the wrongs she had suffered from her husband, she spoke of the guilty passion, and that what she spoke was inconsistent with what she had written. All shall be answered in turn:—first, the imputations against her in the affair of the separation; and then, the defiance of p. 415. the 'Quarterly Review,' offered with the letters. As to the confirmatory proof which is demanded, since pp. 563-4. Lady Byron is denounced as a posthumous calum- p. 441. niator, everything that can help to the discovery of truth shall be brought forward. All that is told of Mrs. Leigh in Moore's 'Life' shall be rehearsed. It is scanty, but in nothing unfavourable to her. The excuse, repeated until it has become an accepted truth, that Lord Byron was afflicted with a mono- p. 442. mania, showing itself in the confession of impossible sins, shall be set aside. Something of his life and conversation in and before and after the year 1813 shall be related, to show that he was not likely to be stung by the memory of common guilt. Last of all, his own words shall tell the agony of remorse

which convulsed him in November, 1813, until conscience took refuge with imagination, and he wrote 'The Bride of Abydos.'

'Quarterly.' pp. 408, 412, 413, 564, 565.

It is thought an astonishing thing that Lady Byron should have kept back from her father and mother, and, at first, from her advocate, the particular offence upon which she was advised that reconciliation was impossible, and the advocate is taken to task. He must be content that those who love Lord Byron should dislike him. But the argument should have been reconsidered when the new light came, and it was discovered that the alleged crime was not that upon which the reasoning had all along proceeded. It is said that what Lady Byron must have told her parents was more likely to shock and alarm them than the charge kept back. That might be true, applied to Mrs. Stowe's charge, which would not be true of that other offence to which allusion is made in the next page, as "something too repulsive to be translated into words." There are things which no woman, no man, will speak or write unless compelled by irresistible necessity. Lady Byron considered that she had sufficient causes for divorce beside that particular offence. It does not seem hard to understand why, if she thought her rightful purpose could be effected by those other causes, she would shrink from telling more, either to her father, or mother, or advocate. She prepared a written

p. 412.

p. 413.

statement,* upon which Dr. Lushington advised that a separation was justifiable, but not indispensable. It is probable that her ignorance of the quality of the seventeenth offence was enlightened by Mrs. Clermont,† and that she was counselled not to withhold it from Dr. Lushington. It is certain that her duty both to God and man required that she should not return to her husband, that she should save herself and her daughter from his power. Therefore she told that which Lord Byron, by the infallible testimony of his words and actions, acknowledged to be true, but which his followers declare to be false, an invention, of the ignorance of innocence, of the serene purity, to which her husband at the very time of the separation bore witness.

It is said that, in a certain case, Lady Byron was ready to be reconciled, notwithstanding the offence. If Lord Byron's "insanity had been established, the specific crime (whatever it was) would not have prevented her from returning to him;" but then he would not have been a responsible agent, and there could not have been crime. Even the rigour of the law, much more

p. 412.

* That her statement mentioned sixteen symptoms of insanity is said by Mr. Moore, not by her.—Moore, vol. iii. p. 214.

† Is the name Clermont, or (as Lady Blessington and Galt give it) Charlemont? Clermont was the name of the young lady living with Mr. and Mrs. Shelley, near Geneva, when Lord Byron was there in 1816 (Moore, vol. xv. p. 73). She was a relation of Mrs. Shelley (vol. iii. p. 269).

the tenderness of a wife, would have held him guiltless. It is also alleged that Lady Byron persisted in making a mystery of her specific charge, until the destruction of Lord Byron's autobiography (in which she concurred), and other things, had annihilated all or most of the direct evidence in refutation of it. But Moore, speaking of the autobiography, says: "On the mysterious cause of the separation it afforded no light whatever;" "some of its details could never have been published at all." Lord Russell, in his Life of Moore (vol. iv. p. 192, as cited in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for July last), declares: "As to the manuscript itself, having read the greater part, if not the whole, I should say that three or four pages of it were too gross and indelicate for publication;* that the rest, with few exceptions, contained little traces of Lord Byron's genius, and no interesting details of his life." The power to destroy was entirely in the hands of Mrs. Leigh and Mr. Hobhouse, and, by their authority, the manuscript was destroyed, "from a sense of what they thought due to his (Lord Byron's) memory." It was therefore unreasonable to say that Lady Byron concurred in the destruction of evidence which might have refuted her charge. It would have been strange had she not consented

Moore, vol. vi. p. 264.

'Blackwood,' p. 33.

Moore, vol. vi. p. 263.

* See 'The Character of Lady Byron' (pp. 90 to 108). The 'Quarterly Review' rebukes her because she would not receive this manuscript from the hands of Mr. Murray (October, 1869, p. 565).

that they, who had the power, should destroy a composition which she considered, as she told her husband in his lifetime, "prejudicial to Ada's future happiness."

Of two errors into which Mrs. Stowe, adding some mistakes of her own (as usually happens in such cases), had been misled by copying, without looking at authorities cited, one is adopted, the other corrected, by the 'Quarterly Review.' Lord Byron had sent a song to Moore, who, in a footnote, says that it was in the handwriting of Lady Byron. Seventy pages onward it is mentioned that Murray, having sent Byron a letter, enclosing a draft for 1000*l.*, for the copyright of 'The Siege of Corinth' and 'Parisina,' was told, in the answer to his letter: "I am very glad that the handwriting was a favourable omen of the *morale* of the piece; but you must not trust to that, for my copyist would write out anything I desired, in all the *ignorance of innocence.*" It was not said by Lord Byron that his wife had copied the song, or either of the other poems, nor did it appear certainly that either 'The Siege of Corinth' or 'Parisina' was "*the* piece" copied; for the letter spoke of one piece only, though the two poems, 'The Siege of Corinth' and 'Parisina,' had been mentioned together. However, the piece was, in fact, 'The Siege of Corinth'; Lady Byron *was* the copyist; and the words, "in all the ignorance of innocence," were applied to her by her husband immediately

'Quarterly,' pp. 434. 420.

'Macmillan,' Sept. pp. 387, 389.

Jan. 2, 3, 1816.

Moore, vol. iii. pp. 151, 222.

before the separation. These words may not be unworthy of careful regard—considering the class of offences to which the cause of irrevocable separation belonged,—that Lady Byron did not revolt until after her arrival at Kirkby-Mallory,—and remembering also Lord Byron's fury against Mrs. Clermont, of whom, when sealing the deed of separation, he said, "This is Mrs. Clermont's act and deed." It appears in Murray's edition of 'Lord Byron's Life and Works' that the piece copied was 'The Siege of Corinth,' not 'Parisina,' and therefore the following words should not have found a place in the 'Quarterly Review:' "So, only a few days before she left him for ever, after two years of convulsive struggle, during which he had been sedulously endeavouring to justify incest, she copies 'Parisina' (a tale of incest), and would write out anything he desired in all the ignorance of innocence." *

'Quarterly,' p. 418.

Moore, vol. x. p. 100.

'Quarterly,' p. 434.

'Quarterly,' p. 440.

The memory of Lord Byron is not honoured by supposing that the deathbed messages, which, if utterance had been given, he would have sent to his

* The other error was the saying that Lord Byron, in the month before the birth of his daughter, had been "drunk day after day with Sheridan," whereas he only tells in one letter (31st of October, 1815,) that they had been once drunk together, and in another (4th of November, 1815) that he was about to dress to dine again with Sheridan, and that he was to dine with him, for the third time, on the next day. The 'Quarterly Review' has overlooked the second letter.—'Macmillan,' p. 389; 'Quarterly,' p. 420; Moore, vol. iii. pp. 187-8, 190.

wife, would have been in such language as Moore has recorded. The words preserved by Galt indicate messages of another kind: "And you will go to Lady Byron and say—tell her everything—you are friends with her." "My wife—my child—my sister. You know all; you must say all—you know my wishes." The hand was not in accord with the heart, nor with the desire to clear Lord Byron's memory from the charges of unfeeling and ungenerous conduct, when the husband's turning his wife, just free from the pains of childbirth, out-of-doors, defying, ridiculing, and insulting her before the world, and the extreme baseness of keeping to himself the greater part of the fortune which he had vowed not to touch, were set down without a mark of disapprobation.

Galt's 'Life of Byron,' pp. 316, 317.

'Quarterly,' pp. 439, 416.

It might seem uncourteous to pass altogether unnoticed the censure pronounced by the 'Quarterly Review' upon 'The Married Life of Lord Byron.' So it is answered: The fallacy of imagining that, because Dr. Lushington gave an opinion upon a statement made to him, therefore the statement must have been true, was not entertained: The statements were indeed onesided, for they came wholly from Lord Byron's side, from his letters, journals, and poems: The letter of the 3rd of April, 1820, seems to add support to the "gratuitous assumption," already grounded on more than three hundred other letters: The "special pleading way"

'Quarterly,' pp. 407-8.

is, perhaps, nothing more than a certain air of formality, from which the veteran writer is free.

But it is time to leave this idle skirmishing, and turn to the strongholds — to the stronghold on either side. What has been proved for Lady Byron shall be repeated once more, and for the last time.

She accused her husband of some offence which made it impossible for her to return to him. There was no question of a suit for the restitution of conjugal rights. She enforced separation by the threat of proceeding for a divorce. In consequence of her "portentous charge or charges," he was accused of every monstrous vice; his name was tainted; he was the object of general obloquy; every possible or impossible crime was rumoured against him; he was held unfit for England, he withdrew, but that was not enough; in other countries he was pursued and breathed upon by the same blight.

'Quarterly,' q. 417.

Moore, vol. v. pp. 6, 9.

In the very dregs of this bitter business, while his wife was urging separation, he declared to his friends that there never was a better, a brighter, a kinder, a more amiable and agreeable being; that where there was blame it belonged to him, and if he could not redeem, he must bear it; called them to witness that he had always declared that where there was a right or a wrong, she had the right, entreated them not to believe all they heard, and not to attempt to defend him, as that would give mortal offence. Immediately after the separation,

he wrote the 'Farewell,' and the 'Sketch,' passionately lamenting that he was separated from her, declaring undying love, protesting that, even if she were unforgiving, his heart would never rebel against her, and picturing her as a miracle of truth and purity. Through his life he never questioned her truth, and expressed his readiness to return to her. Nearly at the close, he declared that the dreary sensation of its being as difficult to return as to go onward, avenged her real or imaginary wrongs. Lady Byron was true and faultless down to the time of her husband's death. It is established beyond contradiction by his testimony. That alone would not justify the conclusion that she continued true and faultless to the end; but it does oblige us not to believe the contrary without clear evidence. nor until the accuser has produced *all* within his power.

His stammering, blushing confessions at Genoa, in the year 1823, and they were written down by no unfriendly hand, are the sure signs of her innocency.

"He frequently expressed a wish to return to England, if only for a few weeks, before he embarked, and yet had not firmness of purpose sufficient to carry his wishes into effect."

1823. Lady Blessington's 'Conversations,' pp. 400–403. See also pp. 22, 23, 83, 84, 87, 89, 117, 162, 163, 236, 237, 315–317.

"From various observations he let fall, I imagined that he hoped to establish something like an amicable understanding or correspondence with

Lady Byron, and to see his child." "He so often turned with a yearning heart to his wish of going to England before Greece, that we asked him why, being a free agent, he did not go. The question seemed to embarrass him. He stammered, blushed, and said,—

" 'Why, true, there is no reason why I should not go; but yet I want resolution to encounter all the disagreeable circumstances which might, and most probably would, greet my arrival in England. The host of foes that now slumber, because they believe me out of their reach, and that their stings cannot touch me, would soon awake with renewed energies, to assail and blacken me. The press, that powerful engine of a licentious age (an engine known only in civilized England as an invader of the privacy of domestic life) would pour forth all its venom against me, ridiculing my person, misinterpreting my motives, and misrepresenting my actions. I can mock at all their attacks when the sea divides me from them, but on the spot, and reading the effect of each libel in the alarmed faces of my selfishly-sensitive friends, whose common attentions, under such circumstances, seem to demand gratitude for the personal risk of abuse incurred by a contact with the attacked delinquent,—No, this I could not stand, because I once endured it, and never have forgotten what I felt under the infliction. I wish to see Lady Byron and my child,

because I firmly believe I shall never return from Greece, and that I anxiously desire to forgive and be forgiven by the former, and to embrace Ada. It is more than probable that the same amiable consistency,—to call it by no harsher name,—which has hitherto influenced Lady Byron's adherence to the line she had adopted, of refusing all explanation, or attempt at reconciliation, would still operate on her conduct. My letters would be returned unopened, my daughter would be prevented from seeing me, and any step I might, from affection, be forced to take to assert my right of seeing her once more before I left England, would be misrepresented as an act of the most barbarous tyranny and persecution towards the mother and the child, and I should be driven again from the British shore, more vilified, and with even greater ignominy, than on the separation. Such is my idea of the justice of public opinion in England,* and, with such woeful experience as I have had, can you wonder that I dare not encounter the annoyance I have detailed? But, if I live, and return from Greece with something better and higher than the reputation or glory of a poet, opinions may change, as the successful are always judged favourably of in our

* His right must have been asserted by proceedings in courts of law, and would have been answered by the cause of separation. Public opinion would have been guided by the truth which the proceedings brought to light.

country; my laurels may cover my faults better than the bays have done, and give a totally different reading to my thoughts, words, and actions.' "

The tamest dotard would not have crouched to a wife who had branded him by an odious lie; the most abject coward, if he had been free from the offence, would not have bowed his head to such infamy. Lord Byron was proud, brave, and of ungovernable rage.

Medwin, pp. 144, 160, 161, 163.

The conversations recorded by Captain Medwin, though inaccurate in some small circumstances, agree, in the main, with what was told afterwards by other authorities, including Mr. Moore; and confirm what Lord Byron so often repeated, that he had found no fault in his wife.

1821. " 'Lady Byron is afraid that I shall some day carry off her daughter by stealth or force.' " " 'I had rather be unhappy myself than make her mother so; probably, I shall never see her again.' "

1822. " 'I have just heard of Lady Noel's death.' " Lady Byron " 'must be in great affliction, for she adored her mother.' "

" 'If we are not reconciled it is not my fault.' "

" 'Lady Byron will not make it up with me now, lest the world should say that her mother only was to blame.' "

" 'I have offered Lady Byron the family mansion in addition to the award, but she has declined it: this is not kind.' "

There is no reason to doubt that, in the later years of her life, Lady Byron did mention to several of her friends as well causes for the separation from her husband, as that she had suffered great misery from a guilty passion which he cherished. There were seventeen articles of complaint, and it seems to be now understood that this was not the subject of the seventeenth article. Whether it was among the sixteenth may be doubted. The affectionate letters of January and February, 1816, imply the contrary. As yet, there has been no pretence of an exact report of what Lady Byron did say, except in Lord Lindsay's letter, which does not mention the offence imputed by Mrs. Stowe. There is scarcely room even for reasonable conjecture. If it concerned Lord Byron only, it might be supposed that there had been guilt before the marriage, and that it had been confessed to Lady Byron and bitterly repented of and abhorred, though not by him. But we are forbidden to conjecture—a strange prohibition from those who withhold the materials for a right judgment. That they are withheld is certain.

The *Times*, Sept. 7, 1869.

'Quarterly,' p. 564.

The letters to Mrs. Leigh, in January and February, 1816, accord exactly with Lady Byron's story of the separation. It is a mistake to suppose that a letter of the 3rd of February was written after what is called her final interview with Dr. Lushington. It could not have been so. It was her mother who first consulted him. That letter was written after

her mother's return, and before her own visit to London. This, however, does not seem material. It was already known, from Thomas Campbell's observations in 1830, that there was friendly correspondence between Mrs. Leigh and Mrs. Clermont, and, from Moore's 'Life,' that Mrs. Leigh was the medium of communication between Lord and Lady Byron after their separation.

It is allowed that anything which Lady Byron may have known of the offence charged in the reported conversations, she knew before she left her husband's house, and that the letters written by her to Mrs. Leigh, at the time of the separation, in terms of the warmest affection, are at present inexplicable. They will be so until the *whole shrift* is shown. There is strange reserve as to the source from which they came. Did they come from Mrs. Leigh's friends? If so, is there nothing in the rest of the correspondence to throw light upon them? Or, were they not rather found among those documents—letters of Lady Byron, and copies of some letters of her lord, which he calls "the quarrelling correspondence," and which he placed in the hands of a third person? If so, why are not all those letters given? And why did he not, with them, preserve the parting letter? In asking advice there may be sufficient cause not to disclose the whole truth, and there is no obligation to disclose it; but in seeking for condemnation, we may not act upon what is called the half-truth-at-a-

Moore, vol. iv. p. 149.

time theory. WHERE ARE LORD BYRON'S LETTERS TO MRS. LEIGH?—not a selected few, but *all?* Among more than six hundred* of his letters, gathered from all quarters, addressed to all sorts and conditions of men and women, and preserved in Moore's notices of his life, there is not one single letter to her. We find thirteen to the mother, written from 1808 to 1811: not one—not a fragment of a letter—to the sister with whom he was in correspondence probably from 1812—certainly in frequent correspondence from 1816 to 1824, when he died. He was in the act of writing to her when seized by his last sickness. Twenty letters to other persons in which she is mentioned are given—not one to her. It is the more remarkable, because, in the advertisement to the tenth volume of his Life and Works published by John Murray, 1832, the editor informs us, p. xiii. "with the exception of 'Parisina,' the original manuscripts of the poems in this volume have been in our hands, and have furnished various readings worthy of being preserved. For the use of some of these manuscripts, and for many other obliging favours, we are indebted to the honourable Mrs. Leigh." When those who maintain Lady Byron's cause are challenged to find a loophole to escape, they reply —"Have you done your part to enable us to form a

'Quarterly,' p. 415.

Moore, vol. i. pp. 217–356.

'Quarterly,' p. 425.

p. 415.

* Moore, numbers 561 (vol. vi. p. 196), but many are without numbers. On the other hand, six of the year 1812, which seem to have been marked for publication, are omitted. On the whole, the number of his letters seems to be about 637.

right judgment, bringing forward *all* the evidence in your power?" It will be observed that the difficulty of explanation is not on one side only. If Lady Byron invented an odious charge, which banished her husband and fixed a taint upon his name, how happened it that Mrs. Leigh continued in sisterly correspondence with her, received her into Colonel Leigh's house, and wrote to Mrs. Clermont an affectionate letter, offering to give public testimony of her worth?

p. 565. Campbell, 'Monthly Mag.' April, 1830, p. 349.

There are difficulties on all hands, but nothing to shake our faith in Lady Byron's truth. If we had known no more of the life of George Psalmanazar than we know of Mrs. Leigh's life, and some ill-judging friends had published a vague and rambling story of conversations, in which Dr. Johnson had said that the historian of Formosa had been a cheat and a thief, and if Sir John Hawkins had afterwards produced, out of a large correspondence, a few letters, written at a critical time, a time at which the Doctor must have known of the cheats and the theft, supposing them to have existed, and in which he wrote affectionately to Psalmanazar, holding him up as the most holy man he had known—we should not have branded Johnson as a calumniator; we should have answered—"At least, tell us all that you know of George Psalmanazar's life and conduct between the time at which the offences may have been committed, and the time at which the letters were written. If

what you can tell be not enough, we ourselves will inquire, asking you to supply every clew to inquiry which we may want and you can give. Show all the letters and documents within your reach which relate to the subject, and lend all the information that you have which may enable us to trace any that may exist out of your reach ; if any have been destroyed let us know why, and where, and by whom ; and let us learn the very words of Dr. Johnson, and when, and where, and to whom they were spoken." If, after such an inquiry, honestly conducted, it appeared that the conversations had been accurately reported, and that the accusation was false, we should not have imagined that Dr. Johnson had invented the tale. We should have known that he had been deceived by what he could not but accept as good authority. Lady Byron's purity and truth, built up on the testimony of her husband, confirmed by his biographer, stand as high as the truth of Dr. Johnson. Unless Mr. Moore, unknowing what he did, had given the means of bringing forth that testimony, she would still have been charged with having delivered a false accusation to Dr. Lushington. Let us have the same means of discovery which have already availed. Let us have the letters—*all the letters*, of Lady Byron, and of Lord Byron, and of Mrs. Leigh —before you require us to explain what by a partial discovery you have made inexplicable. We cannot, so hastily as you wish, doubt Truth to be a liar.

We now approach a new mystery. In the year 1813, Lord Byron was under great horror of some crime, which he seems to identify with that of which Mrs. Stowe accuses him. All that Mr. Moore's book tells of Mrs. Leigh, and it tells nothing unfavourable, shall first be given. The plea that Lord Byron was *le fanfaron des vices qu'il n'avoit pas*, that he was the victim of a monomania, which drove him to pretend that he was an impossible sinner, shall be noticed, and something of his life and conversation before marriage shall be shown—not for the purpose of inferring that the man was guilty of a given crime, because he seems capable of anything—but, to prove that no ordinary offence, no adultery, no accumulation of adulteries, could have inflicted the agony of remorse that he suffered.

'Quarterly,' pp. 419, 442.

p. 442.

Lord Byron and his sister Augusta, the daughter of his father's marriage with Lady Carmarthen, saw but little of each other while they were young. She lived with her grandmother, Lady Holderness, and family reasons prevented the brother and sister from meeting often. They met in the year 1804, when she was about twenty and he about sixteen years of age, and again in the following year, the year in which he went to Cambridge, when she found him so completely altered in temper and disposition that he was hardly to be recognised. From that time forward, for about six years, until after his return from Greece, in July 1811, they did not meet. In

Moore, vol. i. pp. 53, 256–7.

p. 92.

p. 358.

the interval, in 1807, she married Colonel Leigh, and in July, 1809, her brother left England, on his travels to the Peninsula, and Turkey, and Greece. There had been no room for the growth of fraternal affection between them. Immediately before he began his voyage to Lisbon, he wrote to his mother, who was at Newstead Abbey: "I leave England without regret, and without a wish to revisit anything it contains, except *yourself* and your present residence." The only notice of his sister during his absence from England is this: "I have done with him (Lord Carlisle), though I regret distressing Mrs. Leigh. Poor thing! I hope she is happy." His mother died immediately after his return, and he made his will, entailing Newstead on his cousin George, and giving among other legacies, 7000*l.* to Nicolo Giraud, a young Greek of Athens, 2000*l.* to his solicitor, Mr. Hanson, to his sister—Nothing. Between this time and March, 1812, they had come to know and love one another. In the original manuscript of the first two cantos of 'Childe Harold,' begun in October, 1809, in the 'Good Night' to his native land, were the following verses:

pp. 356, 358.

June 22, 1809, p. 269.

About June 27, 1810, p. 330.

August 1, 1811, vol. ii. pp. 31, 42–49.

vol. i. p. 349.

> "I had a sister once, I ween,
> Whose tears perhaps will flow;
> But her fair face I have not seen
> For three long years and moe."

vol. viii. p. 18.

When the poem was published, these verses were

March 1, 1812.

Moore, vol. ii. pp. 120, 131.

omitted, and the following substituted in the tenth stanza:

vol. viii. p. 15.

"A sister whom he loved, but saw her not
Before his weary pilgrimage began."

One of the first presentation-copies was sent to

vol. ii. p. 131, note.

Mrs. Leigh, with the following inscription:

"To Augusta, my dearest sister, and my best friend, who has ever loved me much better than I deserved, this volume is presented by her *father's* son and most affectionate brother.—B."

Notwithstanding this affectionate inscription, it seems that, as yet, he had been little in the society of his sister. She is not mentioned again until more than a year afterwards.

8*th July*, 1813.—Having just given up an intention to accompany Lord Oxford's family to Sicily, and being divided between two purposes, of returning to Greece or marrying, he wrote to Moore:—

pp. 217–220, 213, 225, 218.

"The Oxfords have sailed almost a fortnight, and my sister is in town, which is a great comfort, for, never having been much together, we are naturally more attached to each other."

pp. 265. 273. 279, 294. 297, 327.

From July to the 23rd of November, nothing is said of her.

On November 23, 1813, doubting whether he would go over to Holland, to take part in the rising against Napoleon, he wrote in his journal:—"And why not? ——is distant, and will be at ——, still more distant, till spring. No one else, except

Augusta cares for me; no ties—no trammels: *andiamo dunque—se torniamo bene—se non, ch'importa?*"

10*th December*, 1813 (Journal).—"I am too lazy to shoot myself, and it would annoy Augusta, and perhaps——." p. 298. p. 308.

From the 17th of January to the 10th of February, 1814, he was at Newstead Abbey, where he wrote or finished 'The Corsair,' in ten days. Mrs. Leigh was there on the 4th of February. vol. iii. pp. 41, 1, 2, 54.

4*th February*, 1814. (From Newstead Abbey—letter to Murray):—"Mrs. Leigh is with me—much pleased with the place, and less so with me for parting with it, to which not even the price can reconcile her." p. 37.

22*nd March*, 1814 (Journal).—Lady C. L. "is a friend of Augusta's, and whatever she loves I can't help liking." p. 19.

28*th March*, 1814 (Journal).—"Augusta wants me to make it up with Carlisle. I have refused everybody else, but I can't deny her anything; so I must e'en do it, though I had as lief 'drink up Eisel—eat a crocodile.' Let me see: Ward, the Hollands, the Lambs, Rogers, &c., &c.—everybody, more or less—have been trying for the last two years to accommodate this COUPLET quarrel, to no purpose. I shall laugh if Augusta succeeds."

From the 1st to the 6th of April, Lord Byron was out of town. On the 8th of April he sent

Moore, vol iii. p. 59. Murray a message, and on the 11th a note from Mrs. Leigh.

9*th April*, 1814.—"Mrs. Leigh was very much pleased with her books and desired me to thank you; she means, I believe, to write to you her acknowledgments."

p. 63. 11*th April*, 1814.—"I enclose you a letter*et* from Mrs. Leigh."

p. 97. 18*th July*, 1814.—"If you could spare it (the 'Edinburgh Review') for an hour in the evening, I wish you to send it up to Mrs. Leigh, your neighbour, at the *London Hotel*, Albemarle Street."

p. 98. 24*th July*, 1814.—"Mrs. Leigh and my cousin must be better judges of the likeness than others; and they hate it, and so I won't have it at all."

From this day Mrs. Leigh is not named for nearly two years, until April, 1816, except in Lord Byron's will, made in July, 1815.

20*th September*, 1814.—Before this day he was the accepted lover of Miss Milbanke.

2*nd January*, 1815.—He was married.

vol. vi. p. 284. 29*th July*, 1815.—He made a will. Without reserving even a memorial for his wife or his expected child, he left all that he had to his sister and her children, assigning as a reason: "My dear wife, Lady Byron, and any children I may have, being otherwise amply provided for."

In the interval between the last and the next date, the letters of January and February, 1816,

published in the 'Quarterly Review,' were written, and Lord and Lady Byron were separated.

16*th April*, 1816.—Lord Byron wrote to Mr. Rogers: "My sister is now with me, and leaves town to-morrow; we shall not meet again for some time, at all events—if ever; and, under these circumstances, I trust to stand excused to you and Mr. Sheridan for being unable to wait upon him this evening." vol. iii. p. 237.

On the 25th of November he wrote to Mr. Murray, from Venice: "I know nothing of England, except in a letter now and then from my sister." p. 324.

1817.—In this year he wrote at least eleven, perhaps twelve, letters to Mr. Murray, and two to Mr. Moore, in which his sister is mentioned or alluded to. pp. 332, 338, 342, 345, 351, 362; vol. iv. pp. 3, 7, 11, 25, 26, 38, 58, 67, 71.

1820.—Also two letters to Mr. Murray in this year. vol. iv. pp. 286, 340.

1821.—And in this year four to Mr. Murray, and one to Mr. Moore. vol. v. pp. 188, 248, 260, 265, 292.

1821.—In his journal, entitled 'Detached Thoughts,' he says he would not pay the price of a Thorwalsden bust for any human head and shoulders, except Napoleon's, or his children's, or some "absurd womankind," or his sister's. In his diary of the 4th of January, 1821, he mentions that, in the year 1816, he had sent to his sister a record of his tour in the Bernese Alps. vol. v. p. 200. p. 54.

There is also a letter of the 1st of March, 1821, from Lord Byron to his wife, in which Mrs. Leigh vol. v. pp. 258 to 261.

is mentioned; but this letter was not sent to Lady Byron. It was enclosed in a letter to Mr. Moore, of the 29th of the following September, which contained also the verses in which she was reproached for having patronised the charity ball at Hinckley.

vol. v. p. 200.

In all these letters, and extracts from journals and letters, there is nothing that any affectionate brother might not write of his sister. He was in the act of

'Quarterly,' p. 425.

writing to her a letter, which remains unfinished, when he was seized by the fever which proved fatal.

Moore, vol. vi. p. 210.

On his deathbed her name was oftener on his lips than the name of his wife.

vol. x. pp. 197 to 206.

The beautiful verses written in July, 1816, immediately after the separation, the 'Stanzas to Augusta,' beginning, "Though the star of my destiny's over," the 'Epistle to Augusta,' which begins, "My sister! my sweet sister!" and the

vol. viii. pp. 155 to 157.

53rd and 55th stanzas of the 3rd canto of 'Childe Harold,' with the lay that follows, beginning, "The castled crag of Drachenfels,"* taken by themselves alone, suggest nothing more than the strong affection, and yearning for affection, of a man rejected by his wife and at war with the world. After the year 1816, he published no verses to his sister.

It is believed that everything in the life and works of Lord Byron, which apparently bears upon

* At the time when they were published, some people said that they were addressed to his sister; others would not allow that they could be addressed to a sister.—Lord Russell's 'Life of Moore,' vol. viii. page 222.

his relations with his sister, has been now noticed. As to Colonel Leigh, his name is mentioned but twice: "The Honourable Augusta Byron, now the wife of Colonel Leigh;" and—"we shall stop on our way to town (in the interval of taking a house there) at Colonel Leigh's, near Newmarket." Mrs. Shelley informed Moore that Lord Byron gave Colonel Leigh some thousands of pounds; he thought, she said, eight thousand.

vol. i. p. 7.

March 8, 1815.

vol. iii. p. 154.

Lord Russell's 'Life of Moore,' vol. v. p. 189.

We are told that Lord Byron had an inveterate "habit of mystification;" that he would sacrifice "anything for a sensation;" had "fits of self-accusation," and a "monomania of being an impossible sinner;" that in his mad moods he did his best to blacken his own reputation; that he had a fancy for self-defamation. Perhaps the friends of a braggart of pretended crime would have no good cause to murmur, if the claim to be an atrocious sinner were allowed. The man who makes such boasts cannot have any abhorrence of crime. The safety of his neighbours depends on his lack of opportunity. At least, when he is denied the common right to stand self-convicted, it is necessary to show, not only unquestionable instances of the habit of false self-defamation, but, further, the improbability of the truth of the particular confession. Excepting the few cases which shall be noticed, we have, with regard to Lord Byron, nothing but the vague assurance that he had fits of self-accusation, which he

'Quarterly.' p. 419.

p. 420.

p. 442.

Moore, vol. vi. p. 241.

might very well have and yet be Truth herself—and the free use of the fallacy that if from certain premises false and absurd inferences have been drawn, the premises must needs be false and absurd. Mr. Moore tells us that he had known Lord Byron more than once, as they sat together after dinner—he being at the time, perhaps, a little under the influence of wine—to fall seriously into a dark and self-accusing mood, and throw out hints of his past life with an air of gloom and mystery, designed evidently to awaken curiosity and interest. He was, however, too promptly alive to the least approach of ridicule, not to perceive, on these occasions, that the gravity of his hearer was only prevented from being disturbed by an effort of politeness, and he accordingly never again tried this romantic mystification upon his friend. But how does it appear that the suppressed confessions might not have been true? There were dark passages enough in the poet's life, and he had an "utter powerlessness of retention with which he promulgated his every thought and feeling, more especially if at all connected with the subject of self." "Even with the casual acquaintances of the hour his heart was upon his lips, and it depended wholly upon themselves whether they might not become at once the depositories of every secret, if it might be so called, of his whole life." His confessions to others, therefore, though imprudent and injurious to himself, were true. Why

p. 242.

Moore, vol. vi. p. 244.

p. 249.

should it be thought incredible that the confession which he was prevented from making to Moore was also true? It was strange that Moore should doubt of Byron's having a confession to make of some offence of a deep dye. He had told him of sins red enough, and yet there were others which perhaps he would some day tell, when they were veterans, but could not tell in a letter. Moore did wisely not to listen. He was less discreet when he prepared the reeds through which so many loathsome secrets have been whispered to the world. Was not Byron under the impulse which moved Ludwig Tieck's Bertha to tell the story of her life, and did not Moore perceive that revelations might be made which would lead to alienation? There are times, says Tieck, when some irresistible desire lays hold of the heart to open itself wholly to a friend, so that he may be a friend still more. In such moments men unveil themselves and stand face to face, and at times it will happen that the one recoils affrighted from the countenance of the other.

vol. ii. p. 251. vol. iii. pp. 53, 55.

The special instances of self-accusation relate to the poems of 'The Corsair,' and 'The Giaour,' to 'A Dream of 'Horror,' and to 'Lara.' As to 'The Corsair,' Lord Byron writes, in his journal of the 18th of February, 1814. "'The Corsair' has been conceived, written, published, &c., since I last took up this journal, which was on the 16th of January. They tell me it has great success; it was written *con amore*,

vol. iii. p. 2.

and much from *existence.*" Again, on the 10th of March, he writes, that he had been told of an "odd
pp. 12, 13. report," that he was the actual Conrad, the veritable corsair, and that part of his travels were supposed to have passed in piracy.* Then he adds: "Um!—people sometimes hit near the truth, but never the whole truth. H. (Hobhouse) don't know what I was about the year after he left the Levant, nor does any one, nor——, nor——, nor——. However, it is a lie; but 'I doubt the equivocation of the fiend that lies like truth.'"

Moore, vol. i. pp. 336 to 358. He had parted with Hobhouse on board the *Salsette* frigate, between the 14th and 25th of July, 1810, and did not return to England until July, 1811. In the interval he met Lord Sligo twice at Athens, and passed the greater part of August and September alone in the Morea. He was in the midst of Turks and of Greek pirates,† and, it is probable, met with wild adventures; but whom he was to mystify by alluding, in his private journal, to adventures, and to a report already current, does not appear. It would be folly to conclude that he stormed the harem of a pacha, rescued a Gulnare from the flames, and was in turn rescued by her; but it is not a wiser conclusion, that there had been

* The published 'Life' says *privacy*; surely, the true word is *piracy.*

† "An Arnaut robber who was my host (he had quitted his profession) at his Pyrgo, near Galouni in the Morea" (vol. ix. p. 233, Note).

nothing in "existence," "in mine island" and about it, to give a colour of truth to portions of the "odd report." He is not to answer for the lying rumour that he denies, but for the entries in his journal, which will seem false only to those who, having drawn silly inferences, being corrected, gravely assume that the premises must be false. He wrote in rhyme, that he might keep away from facts while the thought ran through; and, as to some parts of 'The Corsair,' it is probable that readers went far astray in speculating on their source.

vol. iii. pp. 2, 8.

vol. ii. p. 260.

'The Giaour' had its origin in an event about which there is no doubt. In July, 1810, having parted with Hobhouse, Lord Byron returned to Athens, from which he had sailed in the preceding March, leaving John Galt there. In the same month of July, Lord Sligo visited Athens for the first time. A day or two before his arrival, Byron, as he returned from bathing in the Piræus, met a troop on their way to the shore, bearing a Turkish girl, who, accused of incontinence, had been sewed up in a sack, and was to be thrown into the sea. He was the cause of her condemnation. He compelled the leader of the band, on pain of death, to accompany him to the governor's house, and there, by bribery and prayers, obtained her pardon.

Galt, pp. 127, 157, 158.

In his journal of the 16th of November, 1813, in writing of 'The Giaour,' he says: "The circumstances

Moore, vol. ii. p. 258.

which are the groundwork make it . . . heigh-ho!"
p. 289. —and on the 5th of December: "I showed him (Galt) Sligo's letter on the reports of the Turkish girl's *aventure* at Athens soon after it happened. He said Lord Holland, Lewis, and Moore and Rogers, and Lady Melbourne, have seen it. Murray has a copy. I thought it had been *unknown*, and wish it were; but Sligo arrived only some days after, and the *rumours* are the subject of his letter. That I shall preserve. *It is as well.* Lewis and Galt were both *horrified*, and L. wondered I did not introduce the situation into 'The Giaour.' He *may* wonder; he might wonder more at that production being written at all. But to describe the *feelings of that situation* were impossible—it is
p. 189. *icy* even to recollect them." Lord Sligo says, in his letter, that the affair of the girl who was so near being put an end to at Athens happened a day or two before his arrival there, and report said that, "on finding out what the object of their journey was, and who was the miserable sufferer, you
Sept. 1, 1813. immediately interfered."

Moore, vol. ii. p. 239. Two letters to Moore seem to imply that Lord Byron had been the offender by whom the girl's life had been endangered, as is plainly intimated in the

Dec. 12, 1821. journal, and perhaps in Lord Sligo's letter, though
vol. v. p. 293. the latter may seem doubtful. We are told by the
vol. ix. p. 145, note. editor of 'Lord Byron's Works' that he was assured by Sir John Hobhouse that the girl was not an

object of Byron's attachment, but of his Turkish servant's. It appears, from one of the two letters to Moore, that Byron had erased from Lord Sligo's letter some circumstantial evidence of the girl's situation, which would probably have disclosed the name of her paramour. His friends would perhaps have maintained that he had made the erasure for the purpose of securing to himself credit for the sin of his footman; but Galt, who was at Athens during Byron's first visit, and was left there by him, says expressly that Lord Byron "was, in fact, the cause of the girl's being condemned." Here is one of the instances in which he is supposed to be falsely accusing himself of an offence which he had, in truth, committed.*

Sept. 1, 1813.

Galt's 'Life,' pp. 119 to 127, 158.

There is another instance in which the abuse of the plea of *fanfaron des vices qu'il n'avoit pas* is more clearly shown. In his private journal Lord Byron writes: "I awoke from a dream! — well! and have not others dreamed?—such a dream! But she did not overtake me. I wish the dead

Nov. 23, 24, 1813. vol. ii. pp. 270, 274.

* After all, it seems that Lord Sligo, though his memory of the transaction was not very accurate, did declare that Lord Byron had never seen the girl until he rescued her; and the erasure may have been made to prevent the footman from bearing away the honours. Lord Byron affirmed to Moore and to Medwin that he himself was the offender; and he was not unwilling to be thought the cause of her death, in another form, as well as of her deliverance. After telling Medwin that she was sent to her friends in Thebes, he added:—"There she died a few days after her arrival, of a fever—perhaps of love."—Russell's 'Life of Moore,' vol. iv. p. 221; vol. v. p. 265. 'Medwin's Conversations,' pp. 121 to 124.

would rest, however. Ugh! how my blood chilled —and I could not wake —and—and—heigho!

> "'Shadows to-night
> Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard
> Than could the substance of ten thousand ——'s
> Arm'd all in proof and led by shallow ——.'

I do not like this dream; I hate its 'foregone conclusion!' And am I to be shaken by shadows? Ay, when they remind us of—no matter; but if I dream thus again, I will try whether *all* sleep has the like visions." Again, on the same day: "I must not dream again—it spoils even reality." And on the following day, 24th of November: "No dream last night of the dead nor the living, so—I am 'firm as the marble, founded as the rock,' till the next earthquake."

vol. vi. p. 241, note.

It pleased Mr. Moore, in confessing what he called an oversight, which, but for that assurance, would have looked very like an after-thought, to tell that this dream was a fiction illustrating the obliquity of the poet's mind. But Mr. Moore's judgment does not seem worthy of the least regard. He says: "In his (Lord Byron's) diary of 1814 there is a passage, which I had preserved solely for the purpose of illustrating this obliquity of his mind, intending, at the same time, to accompany it with an explanatory note. From some inadvertence, however, the note was omitted; and, thus left to itself, this piece of mystification has, with the

Moore, vol. ii. p. 270.

French readers of the work, I see, succeeded most perfectly—there being no imaginable variety of murder which the votaries of the new romantic school have not been busily extracting out of the mystery of that passage."

If Moore had gravely told us that no kind of murder ought to be inferred from the mystery, the lively French votaries would still have continued to give the reins to their imaginations, while the more sober English would have thought the warning superfluous. If he had said, plainly, that Lord Byron never dreamed the dream, both French and English would have laughed, and the English would have asked how he had been led to suppose that, unless Lord Byron had committed a murder, he could not have dreamed that he was pursued by a ghost, and whether it was just to imply that if he did dream the thrice-told dream he was a murderer. It requires a larger credulity to believe that he made three lying entries in his private journal, contriving that, some seven years afterwards, he would deliver the book to a bosom-friend, in the hope that, after many more years, the fiction should be published to the world, than to believe that the dream was the shadow of something foregone. If we may trust our public journals, such horrors as it suggests —the self-murder of his victims, and the murder of children by their mothers—can be no marvels in the life of a common profligate.

'Quarterly,' p. 419. But the strangest proof of mystification is that in which it is averred, by the 'Quarterly Review,' that Lord Byron travelled about with a damsel in male attire, in order to lay the ground for being identified with Lara. There is nothing in Scriblerus to vie with this instance of the art of sinking. Walter Scott would have described the adventure — in words which nowadays might not be used without his authority—as "the blackguard frolic of introducing a prostitute in a false character." Mr. Jackson, the "old friend and corporeal pastor and master of the poet," was the Hermes of the polite drama, and played several of the many parts which belong to the god of the gymnastic art. He was the messenger; he promoted commerce by disposing of certain utensils, the names of which are recorded by Mr. Moore; he concluded a treaty with Mr. Louch, concerning damage done by Kaled in her furnished lodgings at Brompton; and maintained peace, by persuading Mr. Jekyll to refund money paid for a spavined pony, of which the disguised Gulnare said to Lady P., "It was *gave* me by my brother." To crown all, the adventure happened in 1808, before Lord Byron went to Greece, and 'Lara' was written in 1814. Such are the evidences upon which Lord Byron, convicted out of his own mouth, is to be acquitted, because he had a fancy for self-defamation!*

Moore, vol. i. pp. 212 to 215.

* It does appear that one mode of the torture which he inflicted

That his thoughts and actions were a chaos of contradiction is true, as he confessed in his journal of December 6, 1813: "This journal is a relief; when I am tired—as I generally am—out comes this, and down goes everything. But I can't read it over; and —— knows what contradictions it may contain. If I am sincere with myself (but I fear one lies more to oneself than to any one else), every page should confute, refute, and utterly abjure its predecessor. But the thought and the action were not less *the very* thought and action of the minute. He was as inconstant as Tigellius—that *varium et mutabile* thing which his unalterable wife is represented to have been—the woman of fixed rules and principles—immoveable from her firm purpose to do and suffer as she was constrained by duty.

Moore, vol. ii. p. 294.

'Quarterly,' p. 442.

It was no common guilt that shook him with an agony of remorse in November 1813. Adultery—aggravated adultery, an accumulation of adulteries—were but a jest. His imagination dwelt without abhorrence on the most revolting crime. Let us look at his letters, and at the private journal which

on his wife, almost without interval, from the day of her marriage, was to charge himself with some great crime. She told Lady Elizabeth Fielding that he endeavoured to make her think that he had murdered some one; that he never would give her his right hand, and wore a glove upon it. This, at first, alarmed her, but when she came to know him better, she saw through his acting.—Lord Russell's 'Life of Moore,' vol. v. p. 233.

Moore, vol. ii. p. 253.

Mr. Moore has opened, to enable us "to indulge harmlessly that taste, as general as it is natural, which leads us to contemplate with pleasure a great mind in its undress, and to rejoice in the discovery, so consoling to human pride, that even the mightiest, in their moments of ease and weakness, resemble ourselves."

Jan. 28, 1821. Moore, vol. v. p. 88.

In after-years he pondered the subjects of four tragedies: — Sardanapalus, the effeminate voluptuary who transformed himself into a brave warrior; Cain, in which the sophistry of Lucifer was used to associate foul sin with pure, and tender, and beautiful images; Francesca of Rïmïni, a tale of incestuous love; and Tiberius. It is remarkable, beginning in November, 1813, with 'The Bride of Abydos,'* how often, in 'Parisina,' 'Manfred,' 'Cain,' and the meditated tragedy of 'Francesca,' his mind dwelt on one particular crime. Of Tiberius he wrote: "I am not sure that I would not try Tiberius. I think that I could extract something of *my* tragic, at least, out of the gloomy sequestration of the old age of the tyrant—and even out of his sojourn at Caprea—by softening the *details*, and exhibiting the despair which must have led to those very vicious pleasures. For none but a powerful and gloomy mind overthrown would have had recourse to such solitary horrors, being also at the same time *old*, and the master of the world."

* 'The Corsair' might be added to the list.

It might have been thought impossible that any man could ponder on the *details* of the sojourn at Capreæ—infamies which no living language dare or, indeed, can utter; "of which beasts are incapable, and at which fiends would blush"—that he should dream of *softening* the details of the *pleasures!* the very vicious pleasures, and should attempt to give something like dignity to those solitary horrors, by suggesting that none but a powerful and gloomy mind would have had recourse to them. In the years 1813 and 1814 the scenes of Capreæ were in his view without exciting abhorrence or disgust. Just after the great terror had come upon him, he described parts of a book written by a friend, "a good man,"—"an excellent man,"—"a very good fellow,"—with whom he lived (and, until death parted them, continued to live) in affectionate intimacy, as "the *philtred* ideas of a jaded voluptuary," "the sour cream of cantharides," which "ought to have been written by Tiberius at Caprea." A little later, he marvelled that Napoleon did not retire to Capreæ instead of to Elba.

Dec. 5, 1813. Moore, vol. ii. pp. 295 to 296.

April 19, 1814. vol. iii. p. 22.

In the following extract we shall not find any warrant for the singular opinion of the 'Quarterly Review,' that Lord Byron's infidelity arose "from his very exalted opinion of the Deity."

'Quarterly,' p. 435.

On the 18th of February 1814, he wrote in his journal:—"I wonder how the deuce anybody could

Moore, vol iii. pp. 4, 5.

make such a world!—for what purpose dandies, for instance, were ordained, and kings, and fellows of colleges, and women of 'a certain age,' and many men of any age—and myself most of all."

"Is there anything beyond? *Who* knows? *He* that can't tell. Who tells that there *is?* He who don't know. And when shall he know? Perhaps when he don't expect, and generally when he don't wish it. In this last respect, however, all are not alike; it depends a good deal upon education, something upon nerves and habits, but most upon digestion."

vol. ii. p. 170. On the 14th September 1812, he wrote to Mr. Murray:—"The parcels contained some letters and verses, all but one anonymous and complimentary, and very anxious for my conversion from certain infidelities into which my good-natured correspondents conceive me to have fallen"—"The other letters were from ladies, who are welcome to convert me when they please, and if I can discover them, and they be young, as they say they are, I would convince them perhaps of my devotion."

vol. ii. p. 214. On the 27th of September, 1813, he wrote to Mr. Moore:—"It is odd, I was a visiter in the same house which came to my sire as a residence with Lady Carmarthen (with whom he adulterated before his majority—by-the-bye, remember, *she* was not my mamma); and they thrust me into an old room with a nauseous picture over the chimney, which I

should suppose my papa regarded with due respect, and which, inheriting the family taste, I looked upon with great satisfaction. I stayed a week with the family, and behaved very well; though the lady of the house is young, and religious, and pretty, and the master is my particular friend. I felt no wish for anything but a poodle-dog, which they kindly gave me. Now, for a man of my courses not even to have *coveted*, is a sign of great amendment. Pray pardon all this nonsence, and don't 'snub me when I'm in spirits.'"

Again, on the 8th of December, 1813:—"When I was at ——, on my first visit, I have a habit, in passing my time a good deal alone, of—I won't call it singing, for that I never attempt except to myself —but of uttering, to what I think tunes, your 'Oh breathe not,' 'When the last glimpse,' and 'When he who adores thee,' with others of the same minstrel; they are my matins and vespers. I assuredly did not intend them to be overheard, but one morning in comes, not La Donna, but Il Marito, with a very grace face, saying: 'Byron, I must request you won't sing any more, at least, of *those* songs.' I stared, and said, 'Certainly, but why?' 'To tell you the truth,' quoth he, 'they make my wife *cry*, and so melancholy, that I wish her to hear no more of them.'" p. 249.

On the 16th of January, 1814, he wrote in his journal:—"A wife would be my salvation. I am Moore, vol. ii. p. 310.

sure the wives of my acquaintance have hitherto done me little good." "That she won't love me is very probable, nor shall I love her; but on my system, and the modern system in general, that don't signify. The business (if it came to business) would probably be arranged between papa and me. She would have her own way; I am good-humoured to women, and docile, and if I did not fall in love with her, which I should try to prevent, we should be a very comfortable couple. As to conduct, *that* she must look to. But *if* I love I shall be jealous, and for that reason I will not be in love. Though, after all, I doubt my temper, and fear I should not be so patient as becomes the *bienséance* of a married man in my station. Divorce ruins the poor *femme*, and damages are a paltry compensation. I do fear my temper would lead me into some of our oriental tricks of vengence, or, at any rate, into a summary appeal to the court of twelve paces. So 'I'll none on't,' but e'en remain single and solitary; though I should like to have somebody now and then to yawn with me."

vol. iii. p. 7. March 10. p. 12.

And again, on the 27th of February, 1814:— "Man delights not me, and only one woman—at a time." "Would not go to Lady Keith's. Hobhouse thought it odd; I wonder *he* should like parties. If one is in love, and wants to break a commandment, and covet anything that is there, they do very well. But to go out amongst the mere herd without a

motive, pleasure, or pursuit—'s death! I'll none of it."

3rd March.—In a letter to Moore :—"There is nothing, however, upon the *spot* either to love or hate; but I certainly have subjects for both at no very great distance, and am besides embarrassed between *three* whom I know, and one (whose name at least) I do not know." p. 53.

10th March.—In his journal he writes of the same four ladies, three married and one unmarried :—"I shall have letters of importance to-morrow. Which . . ., . . ., or . . . ? heigho! . . . is in my heart, . . . in my head, . . . in my eye, and the *single* one heaven knows where. All write, and will be answered, 'Since I have crept in favour with myself, I must maintain it;' but I never 'mistook my person,' though I think others have."* p. 13.

9th April (letter to Moore) :—"I have also, more or less, been breaking a few of the favourite commandments; but I mean to pull up and marry, if any one will have me." p. 60.

Last of all comes the jaded voluptuary, "simply indifferent to all excitements," on the high way to Capreæ.

Speaking of a lady whom Moore had wished him pp. 86 to 87.

* One of these ladies seems to have known that she belonged to a company of at least five, and to have said as much to him on the day of the fearful dream: "I am to be one of 'the five' (or rather six), as Lady * * said a little sneeringly yesterday."—Moore, vol. ii. p. 270.

1814, May 31. to marry, he writes:—"I would have gone on, and very possibly married (that is, *if* the other had been equally accordant), with the same indifference which has frozen over the 'Black Sea' of almost all my passions. It is that very indifference which makes me so uncertain, and apparently capricious. It is not eagerness of new pursuits, but that nothing impresses me sufficiently to fix; neither do I feel disgusted, but simply indifferent to almost all excitements."

These extracts, beginning from the month next after that in which he suffered an agony of remorse until conscience drove him to seek forgetfulness of the real in the imaginary, may prove that he would not have been shaken by the memory of a common crime.

In considering the horror that came upon him in November, 1813, and what went before and followed, we must be content to walk by uncertain glimpses. We want more light—not partial and sudden flashes from a dark lantern, to perplex and confound, but full, clear, steady light. Until that is vouchsafed our steps may sometimes stumble, and we may wander into passages that lead to nothing. Still we shall approach the truth.

Moore, vol. ii. pp. 180, 183. In December, 1812, Lord Byron, who had been visiting Lord Oxford, proposed to join William Banks in Greece in the following spring. In June, 1813, he was making ready to go to Sicily with the

family of Lord Oxford. About the end of June the Oxfords sailed without him—why, does not appear. It may be because he was inclined to be seriously enamoured of Lady A. F., and disposed to take a wife. On the 8th of July he mentions that Mrs. Leigh was in town, and that, not having been much together, they were naturally more attached to each other. In the same month of July he was preparing to go to Greece, and had ordered about a dozen snuffboxes, as presents to his old Turkish acquaintances. He was prevented from sailing because he could not compass a passage in a ship-of-war, which, however, was offered by Mr. Croker at the beginning of August. It seems, from a letter to Moore of the 22nd of August, that he supposed he had taken his last leave of Newstead, which he was about to sell. He regrets that he had left it just as Moore was coming to reside in the neighbourhood. In the same letter he says Moore would wonder he had not gone, but the accounts of the plague were very perplexing. It is probable that the plague was but an excuse to loiter, for on the 28th of August he wrote: "After all we must end in marriage, and I can conceive nothing more delightful than such a state in the country—reading the county newspaper, &c., and kissing one's wife's maid. Seriously, I would incorporate with any woman of decent demeanour, to-morrow—that is, I would a month ago, but at present. . ."

p. 213. pp. 217, 218. p. 219. pp. 19, 220. p. 218. pp. 217, 218. p. 220. p. 225. p. 233. p. 232. p. 235.

pp. 244, 228. It would seem that in September and in October, 1813, he paid two visits to Aston Hall, near Rotherham, and visited the house which had come to his father from Lady Carmarthen. Rotherham is about thirty miles north of Newstead Abbey, and about twelve miles south-west of Doncaster. On his first visit, being reproached for low spirits, he wrote an impromptu—beginning,

Moore, vol. ii. p. 245.

> "When from the heart where sorrow sits;"

and ending,

> "My thoughts their dungeon know too well—
> Back to my breast the wanderers shrink,
> And bleed within their silent cell."

p. 244. He left Aston Hall that he might escape the
p. 246. Doncaster Races, and was in London on the 27th of September. On the 2nd of October he wrote to Moore: "On Sunday I return to——, where I shall
p. 228. not be far from you." On the 3rd of October he was at Stilton, on his way, for the second time, to Aston.

vol. ii. p. 318. On the 12th November, 1813, he wrote to Mr. Gifford:—"You have been good enough to look at a thing of mine in manuscript—a Turkish story, and I should feel gratified if you would do it the same favour in its probationary state of printing. It was written, I cannot say for amusement, nor 'obliged by hunger and request of friends,' but in a state of

mind from circumstances which occasionally occur to 'us youth,' that rendered it necessary for me to apply my mind to something, anything but reality, and under this not very brilliant inspiration, it was composed."

In the following extract it will appear that the poem, of which a printed proof was offered to Gifford on the 12th of November, and of which he had already seen the manuscript, was not finished until the night of the 13th. The fact is that, in the course of printing, Byron added nearly two hundred verses. It seems probable that the circumstances alluded to in the letter to Gifford happened in October.

p. 314.

On the 14th of November, 1813, he began a journal, and wrote in it: "Give me a Mussulman who never asks questions, and a she of the same race who saves one the trouble of putting them. But for this same plague (yellow fever), and Newstead delay, I should have been by this time a second time close to the Euxine. If I can overcome the last, I don't so much mind your pestilence; and at any rate, the spring shall see me there, provided I neither marry myself, nor unmarry any one else in the interval. I wish one was—I don't know what I wish. It is odd, I never set myself seriously to wishing without attaining it—and repenting."

vol. ii. pp. 253 to 255.

Then he thus mentions 'Zuleika,' afterwards called The Bride of Abydos:—"No more reflections. Let

me see. Last night I finished 'Zuleika,' my second Turkish tale. I believe the composition of it kept me alive, for it was written to drive my thoughts from the recollection of

'Dear sacred name, rest ever unrevealed!'

At least, even here my hand would tremble to write it. This afternoon I have burnt the scenes of my commenced comedy."

The name unrevealed was, beyond reasonable doubt, that to which he afterwards alluded, as the victim and the partaker of his guilt, in the verses which begin:

"I speak not, I trace not, I breathe not thy name—
There is grief in the sound, there is guilt in the fame."

"—— has advised me (without seeing it, by-the-bye) not to publish 'Zuleika.' I believe he is right, but experience might have taught him that not to print is *physically* impossible. No one has seen it but Hodgson and Mr. Gifford." The advice not to publish related to the tale as first told; afterwards he changed it.

p. 258. 16*th November*.—"I sent Lord Holland the proofs of the last 'Giaour' and 'The Bride of Abydos.' He won't like the latter, and I don't think I shall long. It was written in four nights, to distract my dreams from . . . Were it not thus, it had never been composed; and had I not done something at that time,

I must have gone mad, by eating my own heart—bitter diet!"

17*th November.*—"I wish I could settle to reading again. My life is monotonous, and yet desultory. I take up books, and fling them down again. I began a comedy and burnt it, because the scene ran into *reality*—a novel for the same reason. In rhyme I can keep more away from facts; but the thought always runs through—through . . . . yes, yes, through." Moore, vol. ii. p. 260.

26*th November.*—"I have been pondering on the miseries of separation, that—oh, how seldom we see those we love! yet we live ages in moments *when met.*" p. 279.

30*th November.*—In a letter to Mr. Moore, he writes:—"Since I last wrote to you much has occurred, good, bad, and indifferent, not to make me forget you, but to prevent me from reminding you of one who, nevertheless, has often thought of you, and to whom *your* thoughts, in many a measure, have frequently been a consolation. We were once very near neighbours this autumn; and a good and bad neighbourhood it has proved to me. Suffice it to say that your French quotation was confoundedly to the purpose—though very *unexpectedly* pertinent, as you may imagine, by what I *said* before, and my silence since. However, 'Richard's himself again,' and, except all night and some part of the morning, I don't think very much about the matter." pp. 247, 248.

"All convulsions end with me in rhyme; and to solace my midnights, I have scribbled another Turkish story, 'The Bride of Abydos,' not a fragment. I have written this, and published it for the sake of the *employment*—to wring my thoughts from reality, and take refuge in 'imaginings,' however horrible. This is the work of a week, and will be the reading of an hour to you, or even less,—and so let it go . . ."

We now return to the journal. After mentioning 'The Giaour,' and the icy recollection :—

p. 290. 5*th December*.—"'The Bride of Abydos' was published on Thursday, the 2nd of December; but how it is liked or disliked, I know not. Whether it succeeds or not is no fault of the public, against whom I can have no complaint. But I am much more indebted to the tale than I can ever be to the most partial reader, as it wrung my thoughts from reality to imagination."

p. 294. 6*th December*.—'I began it ('The Bride of Abydos') with my heart full of ——, and my head full of orientali*ties* (I can't call them *isms*), and wrote on rapidly."

p. 300. 10*th December*.—"Galt says there is a coincidence between the first part of 'The Bride' and some story of his."

p. 300. 11*th and* 12*th December*.—"By Galt's answer, I find it is some story in *real life*, and not any work with which my late composition coincides. It is still

more singular, for mine is drawn from *existence* also."

In order of time, a letter from Lord Byron to Galt, a letter of the 11th of December would follow. It will appear hereafter.

16*th January*, 1814.—"To-morrow I leave town for a few days. A wife would be my salvation." Moore, vol. ii. pp. 308, 310.

17*th to* 22*nd January*, 1814.—Lady Shelley says that she passed some days with Colonel and Mrs. Leigh near Newmarket "when Lord Byron was in the house, and as she (Mrs. Leigh) told me was writing 'The Corsair,' to my great astonishment, for it was a wretched small house, full of her ill-trained children, who were always running up and down stairs and going into 'Uncle's' bed-room, where he remained all the morning." 'Quarterly,' October, 1869. p. 421.

The following extracts are from three letters to Mr. Murray:—

Newstead Abbey, 22*nd January*, 1814.—"You will be glad to hear of my safe arrival here." vol. iii. p. 33.

Newstead Abbey, 4*th February*, 1814.—"Mrs. Leigh is with me—much pleased with the place, and less so with me for parting with it, to which not even the price can reconcile her." p. 37.

Newark, 6*th February*, 1814.—"I am thus far on my way to town." p. 39.

10*th February*, 1814 (letter to Moore):—"I arrived in town late yesterday evening, having been absent three weeks, which I passed in Notts, quietly and pleasantly." p. 41.

We return to the journal :—

p. 1. 18*th February*, 1814.—"Better than a month since I last journalised:—most of it out of London, and at Notts, but a busy one and a pleasant, at least three weeks of it."

p. 2. "'The Corsair' has been conceived, written, published, &c., since I last took up this journal. They tell me it has great success; it was written *con amore*, and much from *existence*."

p. 3. "Had a note from Lady Melbourne, who says, it is said that I am 'much out of spirits.' I wonder if I really am or not? I have certainly enough of 'that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart,' and it is better they should believe it to be the result of these attacks than of the real cause; but—ay, ay, always but to the end of the chapter."

p. 5. 19*th February*.—"That same sleep is no friend of mine, though I court him sometimes for half the twenty-four."

p. 5. 20*th February*.—"Got up and tore out two leaves of this journal—I don't know why."

p. 8. 27*th February*.—"Heigho! I would I were in mine island! I am not well; and yet I look in good health. At times I fear 'I am not in my perfect mind;' and yet my heart and head have stood many a crash, and what should ail them now? They prey upon themselves, and I am sick—sick! I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun!"

It is not improbable that 'The Corsair,' written

at Colonel Leigh's house and at Newstead in January and February 1814,* was, like 'The Bride of Abydos,' in the preceding November, the poet's refuge, in the imaginary, from thoughts of real horror; that he had dreamed of flying from the world to "mine island" in the Ægean, with her whose name he would not breathe; and that both were in his mind when he drew the characters of Conrad and Medora. The conjecture arises from his journal of the 18th and 27th of February, and 10th of March 1814; from the intended repurchase of the copyrights, and the destruction of all copies of his work in April; from the song sent to Moore on the 4th of May, in which he proposes to resign all, in spite of the world's wonder, so that he might pass his days by the side of her whose name he dared not breath; from remarks of Walter Scott and Jeffrey, criticising 'The Corsair;' and from the description of Conrad and his love, and Medora's song, in the poem itself.† The editor of Byron's works says: "In the original manuscript the chief female vol. ix. p. 257.

* Lord Byron continued his journal down to the 16th of January, 1813, and resumed it on the 18th of February, when he wrote: "'The Corsair' has been conceived, written, and published, &c., since I last took up this journal." The editor of 'Lord Byron's Works' says: "'The Corsair' was begun on the 18th and finished on the 31st of December, 1813."—Moore, vol. ii. p. 308; vol. iii. p. 2; vol. ix. p. 257.

† Moore, vol. iii. pp. 1, 2, 3, 8, 73, 79; vol. ix. pp. 270, 278; 'The Corsair,' canto i. sections x. and xii; and 'Medora's Song,' section xiv.; vol. ix. pp. 273-5, 276-7.

character was called *Francesca*, in whose person the author meant to delineate one of his acquaintance; but while the work was at press he changed the name to Medora." The motto to the poem—the last verse of the tenth canto of 'La Gerusalemme Liberata:'

"——— i suoi pensieri in lui dormir non ponno,"

suits better with the sleepless thoughts of which the poet's journal tells, than with the story of Conrad. The mottoes to the three cantos are startling. Unless it be understood that Conrad and Medora were guilty of the sin of Paolo and Francesca, there is no resemblance whatever between their stories; yet each motto is taken from Dante's story of 'Francesca,' and alludes to the guilty love:

1st canto—" . . . . nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria."

"No greater grief than to remember days
Of joy, when misery is at hand."

2nd canto—" . . conosceste i dubbiosi desiri?"
" . . . . . ye knew
Your yet uncertain wishes?"

3rd canto—" . . . come vedi—ancor non m'abbandona
" . . . as thou see'st, he yet deserts me not."

'Inferno' canto v. Moore, vol. ix. pp. 257, 263, 287, 309.

Upon the death of Medora, Conrad returns to his own country, resuming his proper name, Lara. The notion that, in the spring of 1814, Lord Byron

did, seriously, think of giving up the world, is, perhaps, not so wild as it may seem. In November 1819, being in doubt how he could most safely take away the wife of the Ravenna Count, he wrote to Murray, that if the business could not be made up, he thought of taking her to France, or America, changing his name, and leading a quiet provincial life, or joining Bolivar. In 1811, being at Athens, he told his mother that, if Newstead were sold, he would pass his life abroad, and that on the shores of the Archipelago, he could enjoy a delicious climate, and every luxury, at a less expense than a common college life in England. He told Captain Medwin that he was once on the point of going abroad with a woman to whom he had been attached for eight months, who was double his own age, and the mother of several children.

vol. iv. pp. 258 to 259.

vol. i. p. 353.

Medwin, pp. 93 to 94.

3rd March 1814 (to Mr. Moore):—"I have 'no lack of argument' to ponder upon of the most gloomy description, but that arises from *other* causes. Some day or other, when we are *veterans*, I may tell you a tale of present and past times; and it is not from want of confidence that I do not now,—but—but—always a *but* to the end of the chapter."

Moore, vol. iii. p. 53.

"There is nothing, however, upon the spot to love or hate."

"The last two were written—'The Bride' in four, and 'The Corsair' in ten days."

p. 54.

It might be supposed, from the letter of the 30th

November, that Moore had suspected or discovered some grave offence; and that Lord Byron, until the fit time came, and they were "veterans," was willing to lead him into the belief that the convulsions and 'The Bride of Abydos' had their origin in something to which Moore's French quotation had pointed. A secret was again referred to in the following letter:—

p. 55. 12*th March* 1814.—"Guess darkly, and you will seldom err. At present I shall say no more, and perhaps—— But no matter; I hope we shall some day meet, and whatever years may precede or succeed it, I shall mark it with the 'white stone' in my calendar. I am not sure that I shall not soon be in your neighbourhood again. If so, and I am alone (as will probably be the case) I shall invade and carry you off."

We return to the journal:—

p. 21. 28*th March* 1814 (from the Albany):—"I shall laugh if Augusta succeeds" (in reconciling him with Lord Carlisle). "I must set about some employment soon; my heart begins to eat *itself* again."

Moore, vol. iii. p. 21. 8*th April*.—"Out of town six days."

p. 59. 10*th April* (letter to Murray):—"Mrs. Leigh was very much pleased with her books, and desired me to thank you; she means, I believe, to write to you her acknowledgments."

p. 23. 10*th April* (Journal):—"I do not know that I am happiest when alone; but this I am sure of, that I

never am long in the society even of *her* I love (—— knows too well, and the devil probably too) without a yearning for the company of my lamp and my utterly confused and tumbled-over library. I have not stirred out of these rooms for these four days past."

11*th April* (letter to Murray):—"I enclose you a letter*et* from Mrs. Leigh." p. 63.

19*th April* 1814.—The Bourbons were restored. He tore out the remaining leaves of the volume in which his journal was written, spat in the face of his species, and cited from Lear, "Oh fool! I shall go mad." p. 24.

There the journal ends. The book was probably torn in anger at finding himself among the false prophets. He had prophesied good things for the Emperor, and, many years afterwards, declared that Napoleon's overthrow had been a blow on the head to him. It is not the least memorable instance of his inconstancy, that, in November, he was doubting whether he would not strike a blow for the deliverance of Holland, and in April was ready to go mad at the overthrow of her oppressor. 2 August, 1821, vol. v. p. 216.

20*th April* 1814 (letter to Murray):—"My departure for the Continent depends in some manner on the *in*continent." p. 66.

29*th April* 1814.—Letter to Mr. Murray that he would buy the copyrights of all his works and destroy the copies. p. 73.

pp. 78, 79. *4th May* 1814.—Moore, being in London, had asked him for a song, and he sent the following, with a letter: "Dear Tom,—Thou hast asked me for a song, and I enclose you an experiment, which has cost me something more than trouble."

"I speak not, I trace not, I breathe not thy name—
There is grief in the sound, there is guilt in the fame;
But the tear which now burns on my cheek may impart
The deep thoughts that dwell in that silence of heart.

"Too brief for our passion, too long for our peace
Were those hours—can their joy in their bitterness cease?
We repent—we abjure—we will break from our chain;
We will part—we will fly to—unite it again!

"Oh, thine be the gladness, and mine be the guilt!
Forgive me adored one!—forsake, if thou wilt;—
But the heart which is thine shall expire undebased,
And *man* shall not break it—whatever *thou* mayst.

"And stern to the haughty, but humble to thee,
This soul in its bitterest blackness shall be;
And our days seem as swift, and our moments more sweet,
With thee by my side, than with worlds at our feet.

"One sigh of thy sorrow, one look of thy love,
Shall turn me or fix, shall reward or reprove;
And the heartless may wonder at all I resign—
Thy lip shall reply, not to them, but to *mine*."

Moore, vol. iii. p. 89. *14th June* 1814 (letter to Moore):—"I think of leaving town for Newstead soon. If so, I shall not be remote from your recess." "You shall come to me, or I to you, as you like it; but *meet* we will. An invitation from Aston has reached me, but I do not think I shall go."

8*th July* 1814 (to Moore) :—"I returned to town last night." "I am going to the sea, and then to Scotland; and I have been doing nothing—that is, no good." p. 94. p. 95.

18*th July* 1814 (to Murray) :—"If you could spare it (the 'Edinburgh Review') for an hour in the evening, I wish you to send it up to Mrs. Leigh, your neighbour, at the *London Hotel*, Albemarle Street." p. 97.

3*rd August* 1814 (to Moore, from Hastings) :—"By the time this reaches your dwelling-house I shall be in town again, probably." "Newstead is to be mine again. For my own part, I have *seriously*, and not *whiningly* (for that is not my way—at least, it used not to be), neither hopes, nor prospects, and scarcely even wishes. I am in some respects happy, but not in a manner that can or ought to last; but enough of that. The worst of it is, I feel quite enervated and indifferent. If I was born, as the nurses say, 'with a silver spoon in my mouth,' it has stuck in my throat and spoiled my palate, so that nothing put into it is swallowed with much relish, unless it be cayenne." pp. 100, 101. p. 102. p. 103.

12*th August* 1814 (to Moore) :—"I was not alone, nor will be, while I can help it. Newstead is not yet decided." p. 104.

"If I resume the Abbacy you shall have due notice, and a cell set apart for your reception, with a pious welcome." p. 105.

13*th August* 1814 (to Moore) :—"My stay in p. 107.

town is so uncertain (not later than next week)." "Newstead is my most probable destination." "When at Newstead you must come over, if only for a day."

Russell's 'Life of Moore,' vol. viii. p. 181.

19*th August* 1814.—Rogers wrote to Moore:—"Lord B. has been at Hastings; he is now in London, and I had a glimpse of him in his *vis-a-vis* the day I left town, but his sister was with him, so much did not pass between us. He talks of instantly setting off for Paris."

Moore, vol. iii. p. 110.

7*th September* 1814.—Letter to Mr. Murray, dated from Newstead Abbey.

p. 112.

15*th September* 1814 (to Mr. Moore, from Newstead):—"When we meet I will explain *why* I have not written—*why* I have not asked you here, as I wished." "To-morrow I shall know whether a circumstance of importance enough to change many of my plans will occur or not. If it does not, I am off for Italy next month, and London, in the meantime, next week."

He was waiting for an answer to his second proposal of marriage to Miss Milbanke, who accepted him before the 20th of September.

p. 115.

15*th September* 1814 (from Newstead, to Mr. Moore, a second letter of that day):—"For my part, I am happy, too, in my way; but, as usual, have contrived to get into three or four perplexities, which I do not see my way through. But a few days, perhaps a day, will determine one of them."

On the 20th of September he was still at Newstead, and on the 5th of October in the Albany." p 117.

It does not appear that Lady Byron ever visited Newstead Abbey.

In the month of November, 1813, Lord Byron was trembling, under the great horror of some reality, which concerned also another person, whom he apostrophises as "Dear sacred name!"—not daring to write it, even in the record of his most secret thoughts. His nights were sleepless, and the terror was upon him in the day time. He must speak, or die, or go mad, eating his own heart. With him all convulsions ended in rhyme, and he wrote 'The Bride of Abydos.' It was a story of real life, drawn from *existence*, from things which at that very time had happened to himself. He burned a comedy which he had begun because the scene ran into reality, and a novel for the same reason. He wrote his mystery in verse, because, as he says: "In rhyme I can keep more away from facts; but the thought always runs through—through . . . . yes, yes, through."

In January, 1814, he visited Newstead for a month, saying to himself, before he went, that a wife would be his salvation. He returned to London on the 9th of February. His friends saw that he was "much out of spirits." He confessed to himself that he was sick at head and heart—"aweary of the sun." At times he feared he was not

in his perfect mind; he was bowed down by that perilous stuff that weighs upon the heart: it was better that his friends should believe his melancholy to be the effect of disease, than that they should suspect the true cause. Some fearful secret was gnawing his conscience, and he could not resolve to tell it to the friend to whom he was wont to confide flagrant iniquities, as things for jest and laughter; he would tell it not now, but some day or other, when they were "veterans."

At the end of March his heart began "to eat itself again." He went into the country for six days, as it would seem, from the 1st to the 6th of April. On his return he did not stir out of his chamber for four days, recording in his journal that he was never long in the society of *her* he loved ("—— knows too well, and the devil probably too") without longing for his lamp and library. He resolved to buy up the copyrights of his works, to destroy all the copies, and to leave England.

On the 4th of May he wrote the song, in which he addressed his partner in some great guilt, and told of resolutions to renounce it, often made and as often broken.

At various times in June, July, August, and September he was at Newstead. In August, being at Hastings, he was in some respects happy, but not in a way that could or ought to last. Having repeatedly invited Mr. Moore to Newstead, he wrote

to him, on the 15th of September, saying, that when they met he would tell why he had not written, and why he had not asked him to come to the Abbey.

On the 20th of September he was the accepted lover of Miss Milbanke. If she had not accepted him he would have left England for Italy.

What was the thought that ran "through, through—yes, yes, through" 'The Bride of Abydos' —the story that he wrote because he must pour forth his soul or die, and wrote in verse, because he could keep away from facts?

'The Bride of Abydos' is written in two cantos. The first canto (from stanza x. to xiii.) tells the love of Selim and Zuleika. It was not fraternal love. The motto from Burns prefixed to this poem is singularly inappropriate to their story; but not so to the dark secret which was to be sent forth shrouded in rhyme:—

> "Had we never loved so kindly,
> Had we never loved so blindly,
> Never met or never parted,
> We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

In the second canto we learn that Selim and Zuleika are cousins, not brother and sister. Yet, since she had believed throughout the action of the first canto, that the nearer relation subsisted, this device to keep away from facts does not affect the conclusion to be drawn from the published poem. But it is not necessary to consider that question,

for we know that Lord Byron wrote the poem as a tale of impious love, and altered it because the subject was not adapted to this age—at least, to this country. Here, again, is his unanswerable testimony against himself:—

"December 11, 1813.

Galt, p. 181.

"My dear Galt,—There was no offence; there *could* be none. I thought it by no means impossible that we might have hit on something similar, particularly as you are a dramatist, and was anxious to assure you of the truth—viz., that I had not wittingly seized upon plot, sentiment, or incident; and I am very glad that I have not in any respect trenched upon your subjects. Something still more singular is, that the *first* part, where you have found a concidence in some events within your observations on *life*, was *drawn* from *observation* of mine also; and I meant to have gone on with the story. But, on *second* thoughts, I thought myself *two centuries*, at least, too late for the subject, which, though admitting of very powerful feeling and description, yet is not adapted for this age, at least this country; though the finest works of the Greeks, one of Schiller's and Alfieri's in modern times, besides several of our *old* (and best) dramatists, have been grounded on incidents of a similar cast. I therefore altered it, as you perceive, and in so doing have weakened the whole, by interrupting the train of thought;* and

* "The thought that always ran through—through— . . . yes, yes, through."

in composition I do not think *second* thoughts are the best, though *second* expressions may improve the first ideas

* * * * * * *

"Ever yours very sincerely—B."

With this letter the subject is left to those who have power to give light to the dark mystery.

In leaving the controversy, the friends of Lady Byron are counselled, so long as her good name is henceforward suffered to rest in peace, to be for the present time content. It cannot avail her memory to discover what was the cause of irrevocable separation. It is enough that there was a sufficient cause. The new calumny will not touch her. If nothing more can be offered than repetitions of what she herself said, these will but provoke new contradiction and slander. The story of her life should be told "in a still time, when there shall be no chiding." If the friends of Mrs. Leigh believe that there are doubts which may be removed, let them bring forth *all* the proof that can be found, searching to the very depth with honest and true hearts; nothing else will avail. If the result be as they desire, all just men will rejoice. If they want confidence or patience to do this, they, too, should be silent. For Lord Byron—his condemnation is written with his own hand.

NOTES ON MRS. STOWE'S HISTORY OF THE BYRON CONTROVERSY, AND ON HER REVIEWERS.

"Of his wife he spoke with much respect and affection. He said she was an illustrious lady, distinguished by the qualities of her heart and understanding, and that all the fault of their cruel separation lay with himself."

"Though I accuse Lady Byron of an excess of self respect, I must in candour admit, that if any person ever had an excuse for an extraordinary portion of it, she has; as, in all her thoughts, words, and deeds, she is the most decorous woman that ever existed."

"My copyist would write out anything I desired in all the ignorance of innocence."

LORD BYRON.

"We believe her to have been the purest of the pure."

THE QUARTERLY REVIEW.

MRS. STOWE'S HISTORY.

Mrs. Stowe may claim from the world, not only the gentleness due to every woman, but special favour as the woman who dealt a brave and staggering blow to slavery, before Emancipation walked in the sunshine. Gentleness and kind regard need not be forgotten, in showing that Lady Byron has suffered more wrong from the good intentions of her friend than from the malice of all her enemies—that a tale,

every word of which should have been well weighed, has been related with extreme carelessness—that it ought not to have been told—that it could not do good,—and was sure to do evil. Instead of setting down exactly, and keeping always in view, what had been said by Lady Byron, some twelve years before, distinguishing what was inferred from what had been affirmed, and what had been learned from her from what had been gathered elsewhere, Mrs. Stowe collected, and read, and then wrote what would be commonly called, "A Story founded upon fact," weaving together, in one narrative, Lady Byron's statement and things heard from other persons, or read, and her own conclusions and conjectures. "The main fact, that on which the story turns," being, as she afterwards declared, "one which could not possibly be misunderstood," the circumstances were worked according to her fancy. The instance often noticed, in itself not important, may be taken as an example. She had been misinformed by Miss Martineau, that Lord and Lady Byron lived together two years, and not, as was the fact, one year only. Innocent of any intention to deceive, she concludes that Lady Byron must have told her, and imagines she did tell her that she had suffered two years of agony.* This is repeated three times over:—"hence came two years of convulsive struggle"—

Mrs. Stowe's 'History,' p. 130.

p. 132.

p. 173.

pp. 289, 290.

* The References are to the 'True Story,' as reprinted at the end of the 'History.'

"these two years when," "she wrestled and struggled
p. 291. with fiends of darkness."—"These two years in which Lady Byron was with all her soul struggling to bring her husband back to his better self were a
p. 173. series of passionate convulsions." Miss Martineau's belief that Lady Byron was married in January, 1814, made Mrs. Stowe believe that Lady Byron told her, that for two years she had wrestled and struggled with fiends of darkness. With the same carelessness, she rushed to the conclusion that all which she told she had heard from Lady Byron.
p. 300. the 'True Story' was already printed, when she was warned by friends that she ought to "give more specifically her authority for these statements." Having her mind fixed upon the truth of the main fact as the only thing important, at once, without reflection, she declared that she had received the whole from Lady Byron.—"Lady Byron," she says,
p. 301. "stated the facts which have been embodied in this article, and gave the writer a paper containing a brief memorandum of the whole, with the dates
p. 281. affixed." And again:—"All the facts of the case, in the most undeniable and authentic form, were at one time placed in the hands of the writer of this
pp. 171, 173, 155. sketch." After it had been shown that some things related were untrue, and some most improbable, she confesses:—"In my first published account there were given some smaller details of the story of no particular value to the main purpose of it, which I

received *not* from Lady Byron, but from her confidential friend." "In writing my account, which I designed to do in the most general terms, I took for my guide Miss Martineau's published 'Memoir of Lady Byron.'" "Various other points taken from Miss Martineau have also been attacked as inaccuracies." She has used the freedom of the novelist in the performance of a task which required the rigour of the historian. She could not buckle and bow herself to the nature of things, and so the "young military man," the plain subaltern of the 'Quarterly Review,' is transformed into a hero of romance—"a handsome young officer of high rank." 'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 413. Mrs. Stowe, p. 69.

The publication of the 'True Story,' brought down, as might have been foreseen, a storm of invective and abuse upon the author, and upon Lady Byron. "The History of the Byron Controversy" was written in reply, and again, instead of racking her memory for Lady Byron's very words, she cast together what she had already told and what she had since learned from the general censure, and selecting "certain authentic sources," proceeded to p. 174. make out a narrative—to construct a new story. She is incapable of falsehood; but she has no faith in her own memory. If what she learns to-day seem inconsistent with what she heard yesterday, she imagines that she did not hear what she did hear, and that she heard what she did not hear. To vindicate Lady Byron, it is necessary, not only to

supply proof of the crime which Mrs. Stowe has published to the world, but also to prove that Lady Byron did not, though Mrs. Stowe believes, and
p. 233. testifies that she did, state to her that it was the cause of separation.

The 'Story' ought not to have been told. It was
p. 300. given in a "private confidential conversation," and
p. 301. had "almost the solemnity of a death-bed avowal."
p. 281. In the 'True Story,' Mrs. Stowe declares that Lady Byron placed in her hands "all the facts of the case in the most undeniable and authentic form," "with authority to make such use of them as she should judge
p. 269. best." In the 'History,' she avows that she had no such authority, but insists that, although the facts were given to her not for the public but to advise, yet, because they were unguarded by a pledge or promise, she had discretionary power to use them if
p. 172. needful. "Lady Byron's object," she says, "was not to prove her story to me, *nor to put me in possession of it with a view to my proving it*, but simply and briefly to show me what it was, that I might judge as to the probable results of its publication at
pp. 167, 233, 269. that time." This is repeated more than once:—"On giving me the paper, Lady Byron requested me to return it to her when it had ceased to be of use to me for the purpose indicated." The confidential and sacred avowal imputed a great crime, not only to Lord Byron, but also to a woman of unspotted name. The very nature of the communication implied a

pledge of silence, and the manner no less. Mrs. Stowe's sister, and two ladies, most intimate friends of Lady Byron, whom they regarded with a sort of worship, were shut out. Mrs. Stowe is careful to approve the faith of the still more intimate friend from whom she had already heard the story, by telling us that she spoke with Lady Byron's consent; yet she frankly confesses that she herself went from this secret and sacred conference, and immediately, without consent, told the whole history to her sister, who had been carefully excluded, and that they passed the night in talking of it. She justifies herself, saying:—"I claim that these facts were given to me unguarded by any promise or seal of secrecy express or implied;" and again, "The communication to me was not an address to the public; it was a statement of the case for advice. True, by leaving the whole, unguarded by pledge or promise, it left discretionary power to use it if needful." Her assent to a private confidential conversation was a promise; her engagement to return the paper when it had ceased to be of use for the purpose indicated, was a pledge. A trust reposed for a special purpose has been used for another purpose, not only without consent, express or implied, but contrary to the plain intention, and, although this was hidden from Mrs. Stowe, to the manifest injury of the person who trusted. "The purpose," she says, "for which it was communicated was not to enable me to prove it

pp. 153, 154.
p. 154.
pp. 166, 133.
p. 2.
p. 269.
p. 166.

to the world, but to ask my opinion whether *she* should show it to the world before leaving it. The whole consultation was made upon the assumption that she had at her command such proofs as could not be questioned." "She said that she had letters
p. 172. and documents in proof of her story." "Her object was not to prove her story to me or to put me in possession of it with a view to *my* proving it." It was thus allowed by both, that the story ought not to be published without proof, and that the proof should not be placed in Mrs. Stowe's hands. Yet she has published without proof, and so doing, has brought down a heavy load of calumny and insult upon the memory of the friend, to whom she herself imputes the blame of having given permission to accuse, if needful, without proof.

It would be impossible to justify a heedless breach of good faith, though committed with the best intentions, and because it was thought needful: but how had it become needful? The Countess Guiccioli's book contained nothing worse than a repetition of the old accustomed scandal which Lady Byron had borne in patience for forty years. Her friends said well that they disdained to answer
p. 126. the railing of the mistress against the wife. After Mrs. Stowe had published her story she perceived that the 'Recollections' of the Countess did not supply the shadow of a sufficient cause. Therefore, a cause was sought for, and was found in the frantic

slander of 'Blackwood's Magazine,' which was thus brought forward in the 'History' as the main cause of the publication of the 'True Story.' July, 1869, p. 124. Mrs. Stowe, pp. 2, 4, 5, 124 to 128.

"The accusations reached their climax over Lady Byron's grave in 'Blackwood' of 1869, and the Guiccioli book, and that this re-opening of the controversy was my reason for speaking." p. 6.

"You, my sisters, are to judge whether the accusation laid against Lady Byron by the 'Blackwood' in 1869, was not of so barbarous a nature as to justify my producing the truth I held in my hands in reply." p. 269.

"The question whether I did right, when Lady Byron was thus held up as an abandoned criminal by the 'Blackwood,' to interpose my knowledge of the real truth is a serious one." p. 271.

"It has been said that *I* have drawn on Lady Byron's name greater obloquy than ever before. I deny the charge. Nothing fouler has been asserted of her than the charges in the 'Blackwood,' because nothing fouler *could* be asserted. No satyr's hoof has ever crushed this pearl deeper in the mire than the hoof of the 'Blackwood.'" p. 129.

"No European magazine has ever had the weight and circulation in America that the 'Blackwood' has held." p. 126.

"When 'Blackwood,' therefore, boldly denounces a lady of high rank as a modern Brinvilliers, and no sensation is produced, and no remonstrance p. 127.

follows, what can people in the new world suppose, but that Lady Byron's character was a point entirely given up."

"If they" (Lady Byron's friends) "had spoken, they might have saved all this confusion."

p. 128. "Had this been done, I had been most happy to have remained silent."

pp. 4, 5. "A shameless attack on my friend's memory in the 'Blackwood' of July, 1869, branding Lady Byron as the vilest of criminals, and recommending the Guiccioli book to a Christian public as interesting, from the very fact that it was the avowed production of Lord Byron's mistress. No efficient protest was made against this outrage in England, and Littell's 'Living Age' reprinted the 'Blackwood' article, and the Harpers, the largest publishing house in America—perhaps in the world—re-published the book."

"Its statements—with those of the 'Blackwood,' 'Pall Mall Gazette,' and other English periodicals—were being propagated through all the young reading and writing world of America. I was meeting them advertised in *dailies*, and made up into articles in magazines; and thus the generation of to-day, who had no means of judging Lady Byron but by these fables of her slanderers, were being foully deceived. The friends who knew her personally were a small, select circle in England, whom death is every day reducing. They were few in

number, compared with the great world, and were *silent.* I saw these foul slanders crystallizing into history uncontradicted by friends who knew her personally, who, firm in their own knowledge of her virtues, and, limited in view, as aristocratic circles generally are, had no idea of the width of the world they were living in, and the exigency of the crisis. When time passed on, and no voice was raised, I spoke."

How much time was given for remonstrance, for protest, for the utterance of the voice before which Mrs. Stowe would gladly have kept silence? Not one little month, not an hour. In July the offending paper appeared in 'Blackwood.' It is hardly possible that the English magazines for August—and an earlier answer could not be expected—should have arrived at New York until after Mrs. Stowe had finished and sent away the manuscript of the 'True Story,' published in London on the 1st of September. To all appearance, when she wrote, she had neither seen nor heard of the article in 'Blackwood;' certainly, it was not in her thoughs. The 'History' is full of 'Blackwood;' the 'True Story' does not contain the faintest allusion to that magazine, but begins and ends with a declaration that it was written to refute the slanders of the Countess Guiccioli.

It begins:—"The reading world of America has lately been presented with a book which is said to p. 274.

sell rapidly, and which appears to meet with universal favour.

"The subject of the book may be thus briefly stated: The mistress of Lord Byron comes before the world for the sake of vindicating his fame from slanders and aspersions cast on him by his wife."

p. 275. It continues:—"Such is the story of Lord Byron's mistress—a story which is going the length of this American continent." "All this while, it does not appear to the thousands of unreflecting readers, that they are listening merely to the story of Lord Byron's mistress and of Lord Byron." "The p. 281. appearance of a popular attack on the character of Lady Byron calls for a vindication, and the true story of her married life will, therefore, now be related."

pp. 303 to 304. And it ends:—"The mistress of Lord Byron has the ear of the public, and is sowing far and wide unworthy slanders, which are eagerly gathered up and read by an indiscriminating community.

"There may be family reasons in England which prevent Lady Byron's friends from speaking. But Lady Byron has an American name and an American existence; and reverence for pure womanhood is, we think, a natural characteristic of the American; and, so far as this country is concerned, we feel that the public should have this refutation of the slanders of the Countess Guiccioli's book."

The internal evidence, that Mrs. Stowe wrote

the 'Story' without having 'Blackwood' in her thoughts, is unanswerable. When she betook herself to write the 'History' she did not find in the 'Recollections' of the Countess Guiccioli any sufficient excuse for her former work, and persuaded herself that the magazine, which was before her at that time (holding up her friend as an abandoned woman), had compelled her to begin to write. The 'History' proves this to have been impossible. Mrs. Stowe imagines that the 'Recollections' became popular in America through the patronage of 'Blackwood,' and sets forth, as consequences of that patronage, a series of events preceding her 'Story' that might have followed, and did follow, the publication of the 'Recollections,'* but could by no possibility have happened between the middle of July, when the magazine was probably received in New York, and the beginning of August, when, it may be supposed that her manuscript was despatched thence, for publication here, in September.

p. 4.

"After Lady Byron had nobly lived down slanders in England, and died full of years and honours, the 'Blackwood' takes occasion to re-open the controversy, by recommending a book full of slanders to a rising generation who know nothing of the past. What was the consequence in America? My attention was first called to the result, not by

p. 130.

* The book of the Countess was published in London in December, 1868.

reading the 'Blackwood' article, but by finding in a popular monthly magazine two long articles,—the one an enthusiastic recommendation of the Guiccioli book, and the other a lamentation over the burning of the Autobiography as a lost chapter in history.

"Both articles represented Lady Byron as a cold, malignant, mean, persecuting woman, who had been her husband's ruin. They were so full of falsehoods and mis-statements as to astonish me. Not long after a literary friend wrote to me—'*Will* you, *can* you, reconcile it to your conscience to sit still and allow that mistress so to slander that wife,—you, perhaps, the only one knowing the real facts, and able to set them forth?'

"Upon this, I immediately began collecting and reading the various articles and the book, and perceived that the public of this generation were in a way of having false history created, uncontradicted, under their own eyes."

The interval between the middle of July and the beginning of August surely did not allow time for the republication of 'Blackwood's' slander in the 'Living Age'—its spread through all the young reading and writing world of America—the retailing it in magazines—the remonstrance of the literary friend not long after—the collecting and reading the various articles, and the Countess Guiccoli's book—the perceiving that the slander was crystallising into history—the lapse of time for reasonable

assurance that no voice would be raised in England—last of all for writing the refutation; therefore the 'Blackwood' of July, 1869, was not the cause of the manuscript sent to England in August, and the excuse for revealing the secret fails.

It is almost an affront to Mrs. Stowe to say that she is incapable of designed untruth. If she had been untrue, she would have persisted in the notion that she had Lady Byron's authority to publish, and might have so constructed her 'History' as to justify herself at her friend's cost. The witnesses who ruin a good cause are not always untruthful. They are often among those who listen for what passes around; and, instead of holding sternly to their own recollections, unconsciously correct them by the testimony and the opinions of other people.

And, supposing that Mrs. Stowe had been impelled to write by the slander in 'Blackwood,' and had the discretionary power which she claimed, it is plain that the discovery could not possibly have done any good. If Lady Byron's word were believed, the 'Story' was superfluous; if disbelieved, worthless. If the truth of what she had said to Dr. Lushington were acknowledged, she had been absolved forty years ago by his judgment, declaring that some offence committed by her husband,—an offence of *facts*, not of words as the 'Quarterly Review' would imply,—made reconciliation impossible. To tell the precise offence signified nothing.

'Quarterly Review,' October, 1869, p. 416. Moore, vol. vi. p. 279.

Enough for her vindication, that duty to God and to man forbade her to return. But, if her truth were denied, to what purpose was it to publish a specific accusation depending wholly upon her word? To declare, in effect,—"You say that you do not believe Lady Byron—that she was a foul slanderer, the poisoner of her husband's reputation. But I tell you that I have repeated her own story as I had it from her own lips. I cannot give proof that it was true. She said that she had letters and documents to prove its truth, but she did not show them to me."

Mrs. Stowe, pp. 166, 172.

And, while the discovery could not work good, it was fraught with certain evil. Why, without any possible benefit to the living or to the memory of the dead, was a foul offence of fifty years past laid to the charge of one acknowledged to have been repentant and a truly good woman? And the injury to Lady Byron was almost irreparable. The friends of the accused would, indeed, have been false guardians of her good name if they had not denied the charge in the most absolute terms. At the time when Mrs. Stowe published the 'True Story' the circumstances were these. It had been shown that Lady Byron's refusal to return to her husband had been enforced by Dr. Lushington—that through an offence on Lord Byron's part,—no matter what,—reconciliation was impossible. The commission of some such offence was proved by her word, and

by his conduct, by his journals, letters, and poems, his acknowledgment of her perfect truth, after she had made a charge which tarnished his name and banished him, and his continued desire of reconciliation. It is probable that, but for Mrs. Stowe, the scandal would have slept. Lady Byron was vindicated; and, the cause of separation remaining vague and uncertain, as time passed on might have ceased to provoke inquiry. Then came the new charge, which as the 'History,' not the 'Story,' avers, Lady Byron declared to have been the cause of separation. The evidence sufficient to convict Lord Byron out of his own mouth, of *an* offence, did not prove this offence (and it was not *the* offence) even against him, much less against the alleged partaker of his guilt. By the help of Mrs. Leigh's friends, the adversaries of Lady Byron brought forward shreds of evidence which *seemed* inconsistent with this new accusation, and *were* inconsistent with a belief that it could have been that cause of separation which was disclosed to Dr. Lushington. They kept out of view the charge they could not meet, namely, the charge that Lord Byron had been guilty of *an* offence which forbade his wife to return to him, and lest that very crime should one day be brought to light, sought to smother it untimely, by assuming that the new charge *was* that which had been given to Dr. Lushington,—declaring that it was false,—suggest-

January, 1870. 'Quarterly,' p. 246.

'Blackwood,' pp. 123, 128, 133.

ing that the same mind which had produced one fabrication might have given birth to another as odious, and announcing that the time was past when Dr. Lushington could affect the impartial judgment of society by speaking out—that a bare statement made to him would now carry no more weight than the same statement (assuming it to be the same) made to Medora Leigh or Mrs. Beecher Stowe. Mrs. Stowe believes the letters of January and February to be authentic because they confirm Lady Byron's 'Remarks.' She is right. However they may *seem*, the two must needs *be* consistent, for the 'Remarks' are true, and the letters are genuine. But the letters hardly appear to be consistent with the 'Story,' and they contradict the 'History.' It has been made necessary for Lady Byron's vindication not only to prove the truth of the new charge, but to prove also that she did not declare that it was, and that in fact it was not, the cause of separation. By averring that it was, occasion has been given to the 'Quarterly Review' and 'Blackwood's Magazine' to maintain that Lady Byron either falsely accused her husband of an infamous crime, her own invention, or, laying a trap for him, connived at it, and was guilty of a prolonged course of dissimulation and hypocrisy. Mrs. Stowe herself, despairing to make the 'Story' agree with the letters, at last arrives at the conclusion that, perhaps, Lady Byron

Mrs. Stowe, p. 216.

1869. 'Quarterly,' October, p. 566.

1870. 'Blackwood,' pp. 124 to 125.

Mrs. Stowe, pp. 221 to 223.

did not look upon the offence with any great horror or indignation; and, surveying the course of things, may have thought the criminals no more corrupt than the whole British public. Such is the evil which has followed the publication of the 'True Story.' The 'Quarterly Review' has said, with too little gravity, and too much truth :—"In racing language Mrs. Beecher Stowe has made so bad a book for Lady Byron, that her departed friend must lose in any event, or in whatever aspect she is regarded by posterity."

'Quarterly,' January, 1870, p. 244.

It would be waste of words to discuss such questions as:—Was Lady Byron under delusions? for there was never the shadow of a reason for supposing them. Whether, there is not proof that Lord Byron had been guilty of some uncommon crime, in the fact that he did not institute a suit for the restitution of conjugal rights? for he must have surely failed, because he had been guilty of common offences which absolutely barred the right. Whether, the separation which he passionately resisted, and she enforced, because duty to God and man constrained her, was the act of the husband or of the wife? The appointed task is, to prove, in spite of Mrs. Stowe's irresolute belief to the contrary, that Lady Byron did not tell her that the crime which she has published to the world *was*, and that in truth, it was *not*, the cause of separation.

Mrs. Stowe, p. 235.

pp. 206, 210, 218.

pp. 36, 188, 196, 199, 292.

Some instances of her vacillation, not in themselves important, will serve to show how she suffers

her recollection to be guided or changed at the word of her critics, sometimes turning from truth to error, because she trusts in what other people say rather than in her own untutored remembrance of what she heard. In the 'True Story' nothing was said of the person or of the mind of the partner of Lord Byron's sin, and it was averred that in the latter years of her life she had felt Lady Byron's loving and ennobling influences, and, in the hour of death, looked to her for consolation and help. The 'Quarterly Review' having made it to appear, by the authority of Lady Shelley and Earl Stanhope, that the person accused was not distinguished by graces of person or manner, nor by remarkable intelligence, and having implied that Lady Byron was not with her in her last sickness, the objection is made to serve for a confirmation of the 'Story,' by questions and answers in the 'History,' which fall awkwardly into the narrative; and the consolation and help in the hour of death, and the loving and ennobling influences are changed into a hesitating: "I think it was here she mentioned that she had frequently seen and conversed with Mrs. Leigh, in the latter part of her life; and she seemed to derive comfort from the recollection." The incidents of the little dog, and the parting scene were, at first, presented as having been told at the meeting appointed for the disclosure. Unfavourable comments were made, and, then, it was confessed

pp. 298, 162.

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, pp. 421, 422, 441.

Mrs. Stowe, pp. 294, 171, 172.

'Quarterly,' October, 1869. p. 438.

that they were not related at that time, nor at any time, by Lady Byron, but had been told, three years before, by an unnamed, confidential friend. The 'True Story' affirmed that Lady Byron, having her husband in her power, exacted from him that the unhappy partner of his sins should not follow him out of England, and that the ruinous intrigue should be given up; that her inflexibility on this point kept up that enmity which was constantly expressing itself in some publication or other, and drew her and her private relations with him before the public. The 'Quarterly Review' informed Mrs. Stowe that Lord Byron and his partner in guilt had not a thought of leaving England together after the separation; indeed, Shelley's letter of September, 1816, is decisive proof of the contrary, and the alleged cause of lasting enmity did not seem consistent with the letters of January and February. Before these new lights, the confident affirmation of a demanded condition, and of inflexibility, and enmity, dwindled into an impression on the mind that Lady Byron had insisted, or made it a condition, that there should be no meeting abroad. According to the 'Story,' "in 1856 the writer received a note from Lady Byron indicating that she wished to have some *private confidential conversation* upon important subjects, and inviting her for that purpose to spend a day at her country house near London. She went and spent a day with

Mrs. Stowe, pp. 297, 162, 163. 'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 438. January, 1870, p. 230.

Mrs. Stowe, pp. 300, 301, 153, 154.

Lady Byron alone; and the object of the invitation was explained to her." Mrs. Stowe, having been blamed for betraying the confidence thus reposed, it appeared in the 'History,' that nothing about private confidential conversation had been written; indeed there was no letter, the invitation was given, casually, at a morning visit, and the day set apart for solemn avowal, the day spent alone, shrunk into a conversation "after lunch," three other visitors, at least, being in the house. Once more: Mrs. Stowe had mentioned that there was an unfortunate child of sin over whose wayward nature Lady Byron watched with a mother's tenderness, patient with her when the patience of every one else failed; and, though the task was difficult, from the strange abnormal propensities to evil in the object of her care, yet she never failed, and never gave over till death took the responsibility from her hands. It seems uncertain whether the care continued until death. As to the rest,—the forbearance, the patience, the maternal tenderness, striving with a nature strangely prone to evil, were true to the letter. The 'Quarterly Review' affirmed, too boldly, that the child was not what the context might suggest, and had nothing to do with the story, adding, that to have mentioned her was, in the last degree, wanton and cruel, as every one who knew who that child was, must feel. Mrs. Stowe, puzzled to guess at what the contradiction

pp. 298, 299, 162. 'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p.441, note.

of the 'Review' pointed, and afraid to trust her memory, now recollected that a woman who lived to the age of twenty-nine years, who had borne two, if not three, children, who seems, when self was concerned, to have been almost without perception of the difference between right and wrong, and, upon whom, it is said without a figure, more than a mother's pity, and forgiveness, and love were lavished in vain—that this woman had been described by Lady Byron, merely as a daughter who lived some years, and made her friends much trouble, being of a very difficult nature to manage. Mrs. Stowe, p. 162.

But the most memorable instance of Mrs. Stowe's wavering memory, memorable in itself, and in the consequence, is found in her imagination that the offence which she has made known to the world was affirmed by Lady Byron to have been the cause of separation. This delusion has led her on to maintain that the wife had resolved to separate from her husband before she knew the cause; and was writing words of tender affection to the sister, whose good name, at the very time, she was preparing to destroy. In spite of the merry conceits of the 'Quarterly Review' about tickets-of-leave, and unconditional pardons, it is not improbable that an offence, committed and abjured before marriage, may have been discovered afterwards, through the relapse, in will, of one offending party, and that the other may have stood steadfast against temptation, 'Quarterly,' January, 1870. pp. 243, 249.

and may have been forgiven. Forgiveness would imply silence. If Lady Byron, struggling for separation as for life, kept silence, and the person forgiven became assured that it would still be kept, although the purpose sought with so much vehemence could not be accomplished unless it were broken, the gratitude begotten by the forgiveness, and the superior love which had forgiven would grow together into that strong and confident affection manifested in the letters which have startled even those who believe, with perfect assurance, in Lady Byron's purity and truth. Lord Byron, although maddened by an ungovernable will thwarted, and by the bitterness of an exile, without hope, without pride, and without alleviation, would not, in moments of reflection, have remained always insensible to his wife's constancy and perfect truth. How otherwise can his conduct and the conduct of Mrs. Leigh be explained? They were entreating Lady Byron to desist from a course which made him the object of general obloquy, and, although they entreated in vain, yet, the two sisters, by his desire, continued in affection and confidence, and to the end of his life he sought to be reconciled and testified to his wife's virtues, especially to her perfect truth. The letters of January and February may consist with a crime committed and pardoned; they are inconsistent with the notion that in any case this particular offence was to be brought forward as a cause

of separation, and by no possibility can they be reconciled with a belief that the discovery was not made until just before, or at, or immediately after, the time when Lady Byron left her husband's house. The 'Quarterly Review' asks:—"Where is the interval into which the alleged reformation and pardon can be hitched?" A question which seems unanswerable if the new version of Mrs. Stowe's 'Story' given in her 'History'—or rather the conclusion which she has drawn from it—be accepted. It will be proved, therefore, by her own testimony, that the discovery made early in the marriage was not said by Lady Byron to have been the cause of separation; and, by other evidence, that, in fact, it was not the cause. It is not meant to prove, here, the commission of the offence. That will be done hereafter in reply to 'The Quarterly Review.' For the present, the guilt is assumed, and, upon that assumption, it is to be shown, that it was discovered soon after the marriage, and was, certainly, not the cause upon which Dr. Lushington's opinion was grounded.

'Quarterly,' January, 1870. p. 242.

The 'True Story' was written by Mrs. Stowe, from the first impression, before she had corrected her memory of 1857 by the letters of January and February 1816, which she read in 1869; and is declared by her sister to be the same story which was repeated on the very day that it was told. According to that 'Story,' Lady Byron learned,

Mrs. Stowe, p. 288.

p. 133.

vaguely, in the first hours of her marriage, that there was a dreadful secret of guilt; that Lord
p. 289. Byron was torn with agonies of remorse; that he had no love to give her. Then came an hour of revelation in which she saw the full depth of the abyss of infamy which her marriage was expected to cover. After that revelation, followed nearly the whole term of the married life, (which, misled by Miss Martineau, Mrs. Stowe believed to have been two years,) two years of convulsive struggle, during which Lord Byron argued, with all the sophistries of his powerful mind, that it was his right
p. 290. to follow the impulses of nature. In the anguish and conflict of these two years of struggle with the fiends of darkness for the redemption of her husband's soul, Lady Byron acquired almost a super-
p. 291. natural power of moral divination. She followed him through all his sophistical reasonings with a keener reason. She had power enough to convulse and shake and agonise, but not to subdue. These two years, in which, with all her soul, she strove to bring him back to his better self, were a series of passionate convulsions. And thus, after the full revelation, passed nearly the whole term of the married life, the supposed two years. Towards the
p. 292. last, continues Mrs. Stowe, he seemed to acquire a sort of hatred of her. She was the only one who, fully understanding the deep and dreadful secrets of his life, had the courage to plant herself in his way,

and to insist upon it that if he went to destruction it should be in spite of her best efforts. He had, in vain, attempted to make her an accomplice by sophistry, by destroying her faith in Christianity, and confusing her sense of right and wrong. When the state of affairs between them seemed most hopeless, their child was born, and she was driven from her husband that he might give himself up to the guilty infatuation that was consuming him, without being tortured by her unhappy face, and by the silent power of her presence and prayers. The dramatic parting, which savours rather of a story founded upon fact, than of a plain tale, and from which the sting is taken away by the knowledge that it was Lady Byron's earnest wish that Mrs. Leigh should continue to watch over her brother, whose sanity was then doubtful, is thus reported:— p. 294.

"She went into the room where he and the partner of his sins were sitting together, and said 'Byron, I am come to say good-bye,' offering, at the same time, her hand.

"Lord Byron put his hands behind him, retreated to the mantel-piece, and, looking on the two that stood there with a sinister smile, said, 'When shall we three meet again?' Lady Byron answered 'In heaven, I trust,' and these were her last words to him."

Nothing is here repeated as having been said by Lady Byron to Mrs. Stowe, which leads to the

conclusion that the offence continued during the marriage. Lord Byron was guilty in heart, but his wife does not intimate that there was a partner in that present guilt. All that can be inferred from his sophistical arguments, continued through the whole period of wedlock, and his hatred, because they failed to persuade, is that the offence of 1813 and 1814 had been discovered and confessed early in 1815. The letters of January and February 1816 prove that it had been long ago repented and forsaken, and that the repentance of one of the guilty persons was lasting and sincere. According to Mrs. Stowe's recollection when she wrote the 'True Story,' the full depth of the abyss of infamy had been seen by Lady Byron very soon after the marriage. From this there is no escape.

She believed, without any warrant, that the offence which had been disclosed to her was the cause for separation told to Dr. Lushington. She read the letters of January and February and was at her wits' end. How could she reconcile with her belief, the words:—"there is no one whose society is dearer to me, or can contribute more to my happiness" —"my best comforter"—"shall I still be your sister?"—"ever yours most affectionately"—"do not despair absolutely, dearest?" She would fain have doubted that the letters were authentic, but they agreed too well with Lady Byron's 'Remarks.' So she proceeded to correct her memory of 1857,

'Quarterly,' October, 1869. pp. 414, 415.

Mrs. Stowe, pp. 185, 194; 215, 216.

or, rather, to show how it was confounded by what she had learned in 1869. Mingled with much that is of no moment she thus gives in the 'History' a new version of what Lady Byron told her of the crime, and of the discovery, and of the cause and manner of the separation. pp. 154 to 163.

In words that were not to be mistaken, Lady Byron declared the guilt. In answer to a question —how she became certain of the cause of her husband's fainting away before marriage, and of his remorse and anguish afterwards, she replied that during the first weeks after the wedding, while they were visiting her friends, he seemed resolved to shake her religious principles, as well as her views of a future state, and to undermine her faith in Christianity—that she did not comprehend to what this was tending till they came to London, and his sister came to stay with them:—The return to London was in March, 1815, and Lady Shelley, at Mrs. Leigh's request, accompanied her when she paid a wedding visit to Lady Byron. At what precise time, continues Mrs. Stowe, the idea of the crime was first forced upon her, she did not say, but she told me *how* it was done. Mrs. Stowe then relates what in the 'True Story' she had called the revelation of the full depth of the abyss of infamy, and goes on to say that Lady Byron did not tell what immediately followed or how soon after she spoke on the subject with either of the

p. 155.

p. 158. p. 157.

p. 158.

Moore, vol. iii, p. 157. 'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 421. Mrs. Stowe, p. 159.

parties; "she first began to speak of conversations afterwards held with Lord Byron, in which *he boldly*
p. 160. *avowed the connexion as having existed in times past, and as one that was to continue in time to come; and implied that she must submit to it.*" In these conversations, he argued that it was no sin. She
p. 161. said, that for a time she thought his arguments
pp. 289 to 291. proved him to be insane—those same arguments which in the 'True Story' were the sophistries of a powerful mind, against which with the soul of a strong reasoning man she wrestled with a keener reason for two years, and, in the struggle, acquired almost a supernatural power of moral divination.
p. 161. Mrs. Stowe proceeds:—Lady Byron excused and pitied him because she thought him insane. His treatment of her expressed such hatred and malignity that she knew not what else to think. But, in the 'True Story' she had very well known what to think. There, he hated her, not because he was insane, but because she was the only person who, fully understanding the deep and dreadful secrets of his life, for two years planted herself in his way to destruction, thwarted his will, and would not suffer her sense of right and wrong to be confused by his sophistry. She continues:—"He seemed resolved to drive her out of the house at all hazards; and threatened her, if she should remain, in a way to alarm the heart of any woman: thinking him insane, she left him

at last, with the sorrow with which anyone might leave a dear friend whose reason was wholly overthrown." Of all this there is not one word in the 'True Story,' in which we are told that Lady Byron was driven from her husband so that he might give himself up to the guilty infatuation that was consuming him, without being tortured by her unhappy face, and by the silent power of her presence and prayers.

And, notwithstanding that in the 'True Story,' the full revelation, the startling scene, by which Lady Byron became certain of the guilt, happened so early that nearly the whole period of the wedded life followed after it, Mrs. Stowe suggests in her 'History,' that at the time of Ada's birth, a month only before the separation, Lady Byron had no suspicion, and that the startling scene may have happened afterwards. If that were so, the many months, spoken of as two years, during which Lord Byron was exercising the sophistries of his powerful mind, and his wife was testing her keener reason in a struggle with one whom she believed to be a madman,—those many months must have followed after the final separation. But Mrs. Stowe does not rest there. Lady Byron left her husband's house on the 15th of January. At least as early as the 2nd of February, she had resolved that if he were of sound mind, nothing should induce her to return to him. At that time she knew and purposely reserved,

pp. 185, 186.

pp. 71 to 73.

even from the knowledge of her father and mother, that cause of separation, to be used only in the last extremity, which she afterwards disclosed to Dr. Lushington. Mrs. Stowe affirms that this was the very cause which she has published; and yet argues that not until twelve days afterwards, not until the 14th of February, did Lady Byron conclude that there was a real wicked purpose and desire on her husband's part, and, even then, Mrs. Leigh was still believed to be a most abused and innocent woman, and the knowledge of the *whole extent of the truth* came at a later period, that is, later than a month after the final separation had begun. To these conclusions she has been enforced in a vain endeavour to make her assumption, that her 'History' told the true cause of the separation, agree with the letters of January and February. The more unhappy conclusion, that Lady Byron may have thought lightly of the crime, an alternative which has been adopted by the 'Quarterly Review' and 'Blackwood's Magazine,' will be noticed hereafter.

pp. 195, 196.

The truth to be gathered from the relation, as well in the 'True Story' as in the 'History,' of what was said by Lady Byron, is this:—That soon after her marriage she discovered that there had been guilt in a time past; that it was boldly avowed by Lord Byron as a thing which had existed, and should be continued in time to come;

and that it was not continued. The truth to be gathered from the letters of January and February is, that, on the other side, the past guilt had been confessed with shame and repentance, that every temptation to relapse had been resisted with steadfast abhorrence, and that it was forgiven.

It may be thought a task only worthy of laughter, to endeavour to persuade Mrs. Stowe that the crime which she has published was not the crime disclosed to Dr. Lushington; yet, there is such full assurance in her readiness to be convinced—the proof is so strong, and the conclusion so necessary to Lady Byron's vindication, that the attempt is not altogether hopeless. She might well believe that the main fact which was the subject of the confidential conversation was the cause; and it is the habit of her mind to imagine that things which she has inferred were said to her. This is not the place to inquire, at large, why Lady Byron spoke, after having borne during her husband's lifetime, in silence, for his sake, the ridicule which, as his friends Hobhouse, Frere, and Thomas Moore rightly judged, should have disgusted the world beyond endurance. Upon the publication of Moore's book, she defended her father and mother, but refused to defend herself, or to give authority to anyone to defend her. After the marriage of her daughter, to whose girlhood the discovery might have been injurious, she spoke, and it is probable that Medora

p. 233.

Lord Russell's 'Moore,' vol. 2. pp. 264, 266.

Leigh gave the first occasion. Upon the death of Lady Lovelace she was free to speak among her friends, and surely there was a cause. Her name must live in after times. Perhaps those only are careless of reputation after death, who are conscious that they shall leave none worthy of care. She could not choose to live, as long as the English language lasts, a disagreeable, casuistical, and by no means respectable female pedant, false, unforgiving, and vindictive. When she spoke of the misery of her married life, she would dwell upon that cause which she mentioned to Mrs. Stowe, for two reasons. Hateful as it was, it was less hateful than that other cause of which the 'Quarterly Review' speaks as too repulsive to be translated into words, and of which Campbell declared that Moore must shudder at the thought of her being driven to speak out to the world. And, again, the crime which Lord Byron had boldly avowed, with a determination to persist in it for the time to come, was the more likely to have been the great cause of her misery. In her innocence she had been ignorant of any other guilt. She dwelt upon this main fact, and Mrs. Stowe, not unreasonably, believed that it was the cause of separation. Is there sufficient proof that it was not?

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 413.

Mrs. Stowe, p. 84.

Mrs. Stowe, p. 84.

First there is Mrs. Stowe's own testimony, contradicting what she testifies. Neither does the 'True Story,' written from her own uninstructed memory,

p. 171.

p. 155.

nor the 'History,' in which she speaks as upon oath, in a court of justice, repeating when she could the particular words and forms of expression, and when she could not, giving her recollection of the substance of what was said, contain any such statement. She tells what was told to her, twice over, once from first impression, afterwards, upon reflection, speaking as on oath. In neither version are the words necessary to her inference to be found. It is fortunate that she did not perceive the deficiency, for she would have supplied them from her imagination, believing all the while that she drew from memory.

The 'Quarterly Review' having the best possible information, declares that far from admitting the cause specified by Mrs. Stowe to have been the substance of the famous communication to Dr. Lushington in 1816, "the inclination of our opinion was and is decidedly the other way." In the controversy which followed the publication of Moore's 'Life of Byron,' amongst the *pièces justificatives* were letters from Mrs. Leigh and Mrs. Clermont; not an allusion to the charge in question is to be traced in them. In writing to her aunt, Lady Melbourne, on the 17th of April, 1816, for the purpose, as it would seem, of absolving her father and mother from the charge of having counselled the separation, Lady Byron says: "I declare that I did not admit from any person the slightest interference in regard to my

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 564.

p. 565.

January, 1870, p. 234.

separation, until my own determination was irrevocably formed from my *personal experience* and *positive knowledge* of the facts that necessitated that
p. 245. measure." In 1830 she writes: "the truth is, he (Lord Byron) always relied upon the invalidity of a wife's testimony against her husband, unsupported by any witness, and frequently mentioned that cir-
p. 234. cumstance to me." Mrs. Leigh, endeavouring to dissuade her from taking legal measures, wrote: "You will have to appear and depose in court. Without witness your depositions will go for nothing; the same with regard to those who have only heard circumstances from you." It is incredible that Mrs. Leigh should have written thus, unless she had known that the demand for separation did not rest upon an alleged offence in which she herself was a partaker, and which might have been proved by other witnesses. Is it not manifest that she understood the charge to be one that depended wholly upon Lady Byron's *personal experience* and
p. 227. *positive knowledge?* There is yet another letter of Lady Byron, written to Mrs. Leigh, immediately after she had seen Dr. Lushington. She came to London for that purpose, on the 19th or 20th of February. The letter is dated on the 24th of February. She writes "My resolution is therefore such that if my father and mother were to implore me, by every duty to *them*, to return to my husband, I *would not*." "You seem to forget that we have given

every possible opportunity of an amicable arrangement, so far from forcing him *to legal proceedings. Of these I am well informed, and have means of success of which you are ignorant.* Afflicting as such measures must be to me, I must and will pursue them if I cannot otherwise obtain full security." She had learned from Dr. Lushington that she need not, that she might not return to her husband, and Mrs. Leigh was ignorant of the cause which made success sure. This letter seems conclusive. If the cause alleged had been that which is declared by Mrs. Stowe, it was known to Mrs. Leigh. But there is yet the direct evidence of the 'Quarterly Review' that in February and March, 1816, Wilmot Horton, on behalf of Lady Byron, denied that the charge published by Mrs. Stowe was the cause of separation: "The specific charge," it is said, "*was* named by Lord Broughton, and distinctly disclaimed by Mr. Wilmot Horton on behalf of Lady Byron." And, again, Shelley's letter of September, 1816, makes it certain that this same charge was then known to Lord Byron; that he knew it to be the talk of the world, and knew, also, that while his friend, Hobhouse, had been satisfied by a distinct disclaimer of its being the cause of separation, the world would be silenced by Lady Byron's visit to Mrs. Leigh. How, then, could this be the mysterious crime which *was* the cause of separation, and of which, in his unpublished pamphlet, sent to Mr.

October, 1869, pp. 418, 565. January, 1870. p. 233.

'Quarterly,' January, 1870. p. 130.

Moore, vol. iv. p. 295. vol. v. pp. 3 to 11.

Murray in March, 1820, Lord Byron protested that he was still ignorant, having in vain sought to learn it, down to that time?* Proof might be multiplied,† but could not be made stronger. Moreover, it is still a question for doctors of law, and casuists, whether the offence proclaimed by Mrs. Stowe would have made reconciliation absolutely and for ever impossible.

In submitting her memory to be guided by her interpretation of the letters of January and February, Mrs. Stowe has been misled into a maze of error. If the particular offence were not the cause of separation, it was told to the world cruelly, and without excuse. If it were the cause, and was

* What did Shelley mean by writing, that he considered the visit to Mrs. Leigh "as affording a decisive contradiction to the only important calumny that ever was advanced against you. On this ground, at least, it will become the world hereafter to be silent?" In what sense was it "the only important calumny?" Not, from its kind; for Lord Byron, as he says, was accused "of every monstrous vice"—"every possible and impossible crime was rumoured" (Moore, vol. v. pp. 6, 8). Was it declared to be "the only important" accusation because it was the only one capable of proof by other evidence than that of Lady Byron? This one accusation was answered to the world by Lady Byron's continued friendship with Mrs. Leigh. Shelley tells of other calumnies which, for some reason or other, he did not, although Lord Byron did, think important. The mysterious crime, of which Lord Byron wrote four years afterwards, must have been among those other calumnies.

† It might be inferred from a memorandum made by Mr. S. of a conversation with Dr. Lushington, in July, 1843, that until that year Dr. Lushington had not heard the story of Medora Leigh's birth; but the passage is capable of another interpretation.—'Medora Leigh,' p. 102.

known early in the married life, why was it so long without effect? Why was the paramount duty so long neglected, and, at last, done so suddenly? If it were not known until the eve of the final parting, what of the hour of revelation which left no kind of room for doubt, and the two years of agony that followed? If it were not fully known on the 14th of February, if Mrs. Leigh was then considered as a most abused and innocent woman, and the knowledge of *the whole extent of the truth* came at a later time, how was it that, at least as early as the 2nd of February, Lady Byron had resolved, and had told her father, that she would never return to her husband? If it had just then become known, how are the affectionate letters of the 14th and 24th of February to be explained? At last, hopeless of persuading herself or others that the cause of a determination made on the 2nd of February was not yet known on the 14th, Mrs. Stowe broke from her endless mazes, and forgetting Lady Byron's struggle with thoughts and feelings, the deadly paleness, the fainting, the awful intensity of repressed emotion, which her mere attempt to tell the story called forth; and forgetting that a wife should not leave her husband for a light thing, rushed into the desperate conclusion that it was not necessary to suppose great horror and indignation on the part of Lady Byron, who, standing silently aside and sur-

Mrs. Stowe, p. 289. p. 195.

p. 196.

p. 73.

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 415. January, 1870, p. 227.

Mrs. Stowe, pp. 155, 159.

pp. 221 223.

p. 222. veying the course of things,* might have thought Mrs. Leigh not more corrupt than all the rest of the world. This possible thought of Lady Byron's heart, Mrs. Stowe adopts as her own positive opinion. "Lord Byron," she says, "if we look at it rightly, did not corrupt Mrs. Leigh any more than he did the whole British public."

The argument is fit for a place among Lord Byron's sophistries. There *was* deadly corruption in England then, as there is now. But the English nation was not corrupt to that degree. Immeasurable horror and detestation, with instinctive loathing, not to be averted by specious arguments, then, as now, doomed that most brutalizing sin. In the very same year, the voice of a man whose genius ennobled the plain sense and homely feelings of his countrymen,† spoke their abhorrence of the crime, not in a

* It is another instance of Mrs. Stowe's strange confusion of time and circumstance, that she supposes Lady Byron's thoughts in 1816 to have arisen from the contemplation of things that happened in 1819, when the first and second cantos of Don Juan were published, and in 1822.

† "I have read books enough, and observed and conversed with enough of eminent and splendidly cultivated minds, too, in my time; but, I assure you, I have heard higher sentiments from the lips of poor *uneducated* men and women, when exerting the spirit of severe yet gentle heroism under difficulties and afflictions, or speaking their simple thoughts as to circumstances in the lot of friends and neighbours, than I ever yet met with out of the pages of the Bible. We shall never learn to feel and respect our real calling and destiny unless we have taught ourselves to consider everything as moonshine compared with the education of the heart."—Walter Scott in *Lockhart's Life*, vol. viii. pp. 27-8.

passing sentence, but, page after page, chapter after chapter. To compare the emotions with which Lord Byron and Walter Scott regarded this hateful offence will answer the critics who tell us that we are not rashly to class Lord Byron with those poetical offenders who have bent their powers to divest incest of its hereditary horrors.

Moore, vol. x. p. 151.

From 'Parisina,'

Published in 1816.

p. 160 to 161. 'Parisina,' iii.

They only for each other breathe;
Their very sighs are full of joy.

Of guilt, of peril, do they deem
In that tumultuous tender dream?
Who that hath felt that passion's power,
Or paused or fear'd in such an hour?

With many a lingering look they leave
The spot of guilty gladness past;
And though they hope, and vow, they grieve,
As if that parting were the last.
The frequent sigh—the long embrace—
The lip that there would cling for ever.

In the 'Antiquary,' Walter Scott tells the misery of a man who through twenty years of widowhood had been, falsely, led to believe that, in ignorance, he had wedded his father's daughter.

From the 'Antiquary,'

Published in 1816.

"I left my paternal mansion," he concluded, "as if the furies of hell had driven me forth, and travelled

cap. 34.

with frantic velocity I knew not whither. Nor have I the slightest recollection of what I did or whither I went, until I was discovered by my brother." "From that moment I considered myself as blotted out of the book of the living, and as having nothing left to do with this world." "If ever during these twenty years, there crawled upon earth a living being deserving your pity, I have been that man. My food has not nourished me—my sleep has not refreshed me—my devotions have not comforted me. All that is cheering and necessary to man has been to me converted into poison. The rare and limited intercourse which I have held with others has been most odious to me. I felt as if I were bringing the contamination of unnatural and inexpressible guilt among the gay and the innocent." "I vegetated on as I could in the same spot,—fancy, feeling, judgment, and health gradually decaying."

Mrs. Stowe's Reviewers.

'*Blackwood's Magazine*,' January, 1870.

'Blackwood,' July, 1869, pp. 30 to 32.

'Blackwood's Magazine' began by arguing that Lady Byron had devised a plot to prove her husband mad, and had falsely pretended that she acted in concert with his nearest relatives, whereas Mrs. Leigh's conduct negatived in the strongest degree that *she* could have been a party, and, after a careful examination, no trace could be found of the presence of Lord Byron's cousins. It was then concluded

that the "moral Brinvilliers" was far more guilty than if she had uttered a bold falsehood. The 'Quarterly Review' has proved that there was much reason to doubt the poet's sanity; and that his wife certainly did act together with Mrs. Leigh and Captain Byron. It will be enough to cite three passages from the magazine, turning away from it with distaste, but without wonder. To those who are inexpressibly touched by the phantom of the aged lady, the severe beauty of Lady Byron can have no charm. They prefer Lady Plyant to Camiola.

'Quarterly,' January, pp. 221, 223 to 224. 227 to 228.

"We may as well say, in the outset, that we see no reason to doubt either that Mrs. Stowe received this story from the lips of Lady Byron, or that she believed it to be true."

'Blackwood,' January, 1870, pp. 123 to 125.

"We say distinctly that a woman whose moral sense was so preverted would be held in contempt and abhorrence by every one of her own sex who had not sunk into a state of degradation lower than that of the lowest prostitute that ever haunted the night houses of the Haymarket. The details of our police courts show that there are such households as Mrs. Stowe would fain persuade us Lady Byron's was; but they show us also, that they excite disgust even in the wretched and vicious neighbourhoods in which they exist."

It was not enough to cast down Lady Byron into a deep lower than the lowest. The same occasion

must be taken to exalt, with equal recklessness, her husband's chivalry.

pp. 126 to 127. "If this kind of treason to society is tolerated, there is no knowing where it will stop. An attempt was once made to soil the fair fame of Martha Blount, and the offender was deservedly 'made manure of for the top of Parnassus' by Byron himself."

Moore, vol. v. pp. 154 to 155. Byron's anger having been kindled because Bowles believed that Martha Blount could *not* have regarded Pope *personally* with attachment, he vindicated her fair fame by protesting that she was but a sorry puss, not worthy to be—and it was of no very great consequence whether she was or was not—Pope's concubine.

"To me," he writes, "it appears of no very great consequence whether Martha Blount was or was not Pope's mistress, though I could have wished him a better. She appears to have been a cold-hearted, interested, ignorant, disagreeable woman, upon whom the tenderness of Pope's heart in the desolation of his latter days was cast away." "She seems to have been so totally unworthy of tenderness that it is an additional proof of the kindness of Pope's heart to have been able to love such a being. But we must love something. I agree with Mr. B. that *she* could at no time have regarded *Pope personally* with attachment, because she was incapable of attachment; but I deny that Pope could not be regarded with personal attachment by a worthier woman."

The 'Quarterly Review.'

The 'Quarterly Review,' which began by fumigating 'Don Juan' for family use, has ended with a boast, too carelessly expressed, that by its aid "under Providence" and with Mrs. Stowe for an accomplice, the sinner, that is, Lord Byron, has been canonised. There is no cause for triumph. A cloud has been raised which, for a little while, may have obscured Lady Byron's good name, and an uncertain shadow upon Lord Byron's glory has been changed into two dark spots which will never be removed. Of the life for which honours next to divine are thus claimed, we have seen, under Lord Byron's own hand, something before marriage in the 'Bride of Abydos,' and after marriage in 'The Married Life of Lord Byron;' and now his wife's story of the two lives united shall be told. This also rests upon his testimony; upon his witness to her truth, and to his own conduct before marriage and after separation; and may be weighed against Lord Broughton's judgment that his friend "was in the best sense of the word a gentleman," and Mrs. Shelley's conclusion:—"but still he was very nice."*

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 401. January, 1870, p. 250.

'Blackwood,' Jan. 1870, p. 138.

Lord Russell's 'Moore,' vol. v. p. 178.

* 25th June, 1827.—"Went to the Exhibition to meet Mrs. Shelley. Seems to have known Byron thoroughly, and always winds up her account of his bad traits with "but still he was very nice."

Passages from Lady Anne Barnard's Private Family Memoirs (written in 1818) *sent to the Editor of the 'Times' Newspaper by Lord Lindsay, and published 7th September*, 1869.

Lady Anne Barnard, the Lady Anne Lindsay who, in 1772, wrote 'Auld Robin Gray.'

"The separation of Lord and Lady Byron astonished the world, which believed him a reformed man as to his habits, and a becalmed man as to his remorses. He had written nothing that appeared after his marriage till the famous 'Fare Thee Well,' which had the power of compelling those to pity the writer who were not well aware that he was not the unhappy person he affected to be. Lady Byron's misery was whispered soon after her marriage, and his illusage; but no word transpired, no sign escaped from her. She gave birth shortly to a daughter, and when she went as soon as she was recovered on a visit to her father's, taking her little Ada with her, no one knew that it was to return to her lord no more. At that period a severe fit of illness had confined me to bed for two months. I heard of Lady Byron's distress; of the pains he took to give a harsh impression of her character to the world. I wrote to her, and entreated her to come and let me see and hear her, if she conceived my sympathy or counsel could be any comfort to her. She came—but what a tale was unfolded by this interesting young creature, who had so fondly hoped to have made a young man of genius and romance (as she

supposed) happy! They had not been an hour in the carriage which conveyed them from the church when, breaking into a malignant sneer,* 'Oh! what a dupe you have been to your imagination. How is it possible a woman of your sense could form the wild hope of reforming *me?* Many are the tears you will have to shed ere that plan is accomplished. It is enough for me that you are my wife for me to hate you; if you were the wife of any other man, I own you might have charms, &c.' I, who listened, was astonished. 'How could you go on after this,' said I, 'my dear? Why did you not return to your father's?' 'Because I had not a conception he was in earnest; because I reckoned it a bad jest, and told him so—that my opinions of him were very different from his of himself, otherwise he would not find me by his side. He laughed it over when he saw me appear hurt, and I forgot what had passed till forced to remember it. I believe he was pleased with me too for a little while. I supposed it had escaped his memory that I was his wife.' But she described the happiness they enjoyed to have been unequal and perturbed. Her situation in a short time might have entitled her to some tenderness, but she made no claim on him for any. He sometimes reproached her for the motives that had induced her

* "He opened the drawing-room door himself, and received my congratulations as savagely as I expected, looking demonlike, as he often did."—Lady Shelley, as quoted by the 'Quarterly Review, October, 1869, p. 421.

to marry him—all was vanity, the vanity of Miss Milbanke carrying the point of reforming Lord Byron! He always knew *her* inducements; her pride shut her eyes to *his*; *he* wished to build up his character and his fortunes; both were somewhat deranged; she had a high name and would have a fortune worth his attention—let her look to that for *his* motives! 'O, Byron, Byron,' she said,' how you desolate me!' He would then accuse himself of being mad, and throw himself on the ground in a frenzy, which she believe was affected to conceal the coldness and malignity of his heart—an affectation which at that time never failed to meet with the tenderest commiseration. I could find by some implications, not followed up by me, lest she might have condemned herself afterwards for her involuntary disclosures, that he soon attempted to corrupt her principles, both with respect to her own conduct and her latitude for his. She saw the precipice on which she stood, and kept his sister with her as much as possible. He returned in the evenings from the haunts of vice, where he made her understand he had been, with manners so profligate! 'O, the wretch!' said I, 'and had he no moments of remorse?' 'Sometimes he appeared to have them. One night, coming home from one of his lawless parties, he saw me so indignantly collected, and bearing all with such a determined calmness, that a rush of remorse seemed to come over him; he called himself a monster,

though his sister was present, and threw himself in agony at my feet. 'I could not, no, I could not forgive him such injuries. He had lost me for ever!' Astonished at the return of virtue, my tears, I believe, flowed over his face, and I said 'Byron, all is forgotten, never, never shall you hear of it more!' He started up, and folding his arms while he looked at me, burst into laughter. 'What do you mean?' said I; 'Only a philosophical experiment, that's all,' said he; 'I wished to ascertain the value of your resolutions.' I need not say more of this prince of duplicity, except that varied were his methods of rendering her wretched, even to the last. When her lovely little child was born, and it was laid beside its mother on the bed, and he was informed 'he might see his daughter:' after gazing at it with an exulting smile, this was the ejaculation that broke from him, 'Oh! what an implement of torture have I acquired in you!' Such he rendered it by his eyes and manner, keeping her in a perpetual alarm for its safety when in his presence. All this reads madder than I believe he was; but she had not then made up her mind to disbelieve his pretended insanity, and conceived it best to intrust her secret with the excellent Dr. Baillie, telling him all that seemed to regard the state of her husband's mind, and letting his advice regulate her conduct. Baillie doubted of his derangement, but as he did not reckon his own opinion infallible, he wished her to take precautions as if her husband was

so. He recommended her going to the country, but to give him no suspicions of her intentions of remaining there, and for a short time to show no coldness in her letters till she could better ascertain his state. She went—regretting, as she told me, to wear any semblance but the truth. A short time disclosed the story to the world. He acted the part of a man driven to despair by her inflexible resentment and by the arts of a governess (once a servant in the family) who hated him. 'I will give you,' proceeds Lady Anne, 'a few paragraphs transcribed from one of Lady Byron's own letters to me. It is sorrowful to think that in a very little time this young and amiable creature, wise, patient, and feeling, will have her character mistaken by every one who reads Byron's works. To rescue her from this I preserved her letters, and when she afterwards expressed a fear that anything of her writing should ever fall into hands to injure him (I suppose she meant by publication) I safely assured her that it never should. But here this letter shall be placed, a sacred record in her favour, unknown to herself:—

"I am a very incompetent judge of the impression which the last canto of 'Childe Harold' may produce on the minds of indifferent readers. It contains the usual trace of a conscience restlessly awake, though his object has been too long to aggravate its burden, as if it could thus be oppressed into eternal stupor. I will hope, as you do,

that it survives for his ultimate good. It was the acuteness of his remorse, impenitent in its character, which so long seemed to demand from my compassion to spare every semblance of reproach, every look of grief, which might have said to his conscience, 'You have made me wretched.' I am decidedly of opinion that he *is* responsible. He has wished to be thought partially deranged, or on the brink of it, to perplex observers and prevent them from tracing effects to their real causes through all the intricacies of his conduct. I was, as I told you, at one time the dupe of his acted insanity, and clung to the former delusions in regard to the motives that concerned me personally till the whole system was laid bare. He is the absolute monarch of words, and uses them as Buonaparte did lives, for conquest, without more regard to their intrinsic value, considering them only as cyphers which must derive all their import from the situation in which he places them, and the ends to which he adapts them with such consummate skill. Why, then, you will say does he not employ them to give a better colour to his own character? Because he is too good an actor to over act, or to assume a moral garb which it would be easy to strip off. In regard to his poetry, egotism is the vital principle of his imagination, which it is difficult for him to kindle on any subject with which his own character and interests are not identified; but by the intro-

duction of fictitious incidents, by change of scene or time, he has enveloped his poetical disclosures in a system impenetrable except to a very few, and his constant desire of creating a sensation makes him not averse to be the object of wonder and curiosity, even though accompanied by some dark and vague suspicions. Nothing has contributed more to the misunderstanding of his real character than the lonely grandeur in which he shrouds it, and his affectation of being above mankind, when he exists almost in their voice. The romance of his sentiments is another feature of this mask of state. I know no one more habitually destitute of that enthusiasm he so beautifully expresses, and to which he can work work up his fancy chiefly by contagion. I had heard he was the best of brothers, the most generous of friends, and I thought such feelings only required to be warmed and cherished into more diffusive benevolence. Though these opinions are eradicated, and could never return but with the decay of my memory, you will not wonder if there are still moments when the association of feelings which arose from them soften and sadden my thoughts. But I have not thanked you, dearest Lady Anne, for your kindness in regard to a principal object—that of rectifying false impressions. I trust you understand my wishes, which never were to injure Lord Byron in any way; for, though he would not suffer me to remain his wife, he cannot

prevent me from continuing his friend; and it was from considering myself as such that I silenced the accusations by which my own conduct might have been more fully justified. It is not necessary to speak ill of his heart in general; it is sufficient that to me it was hard and impenetrable—that my own must have been broken before his could have been touched. I would rather represent this as *my* misfortune than as *his* guilt; but, surely, that misfortune is not to be made my crime! Such are my feelings; you will judge how to act. His allusions to me in 'Childe Harold' are cruel and cold, but with such a semblance as to make *me* appear so, and to attract all sympathy to himself. It is said in this poem that hatred of him will be taught as a lesson to his child. I might appeal to all who have ever heard me speak of him, and still more to my own heart, to witness that there has been no moment when I have remembered injury otherwise than affectionately and sorrowfully. It is not my duty to give way to hopeless and wholly unrequited affection; but, so long as I live, my chief struggle will probably be not to remember him too kindly. I do not seek the sympathy of the world, but I wish to be known by those whose opinion is valuable and whose kindness is dear to me. Among such, my dear Lady Anne, you will ever be remembered by your truly affectionate A. Byron."

Extracts from a Letter of Lady Byron to Mrs. Leigh, written, probably, in December, 1815.

From the 'Quarterly Review,' January, 1870, pp. 223 to 224. Lady Byron.

"I suffered yesterday, and am suffering from B.'s distraction, which is of the *very worst* kind. He leaves the house, telling me he will abandon himself to every sort of desperation; speaks to me only to upbraid me with having married him when he wished not, and says he is therefore acquitted of all principle towards me, and I must consider myself only to be answerable for the vicious courses to which his despair will drive him and is driving him. The going out of the house and the drinking are the most fatal. He was really quite frantic yesterday; said he did not care for any consequences to me."

"I have waited to the last in the hope of some change; but it is incurable pride and madness. O Augusta, will it ever change for me! I scarcely know what I say; though I have been making the best of things till yesterday, when self-deception became impossible. I have thought that since last Saturday (on which night he sat drinking with Kinnaird's party till half-past four in the morning), his head has never been right, and he will add, I fear, more and more to the cause."

Letter from Lady Byron to Mrs. Leigh.

"Kirkby-Mallory, Feb. 3rd, 1816. My dearest Augusta, you are desired by your brother to ask if my father has acted with my concurrence in proposing a separation. He has. It cannot be supposed that, in my present distressing situation, I am capable of stating in a detailed manner the reasons which will not only justify this measure, but compel me to take it; and it never can be my wish to remember *unnecessarily* those injuries for which, however deep, I feel no resentment. I will now only recall to Lord Byron's mind his avowed and insurmountable aversion to the married state, and the desire and determination he has expressed ever since its commencement to free himself from that bondage, as finding it quite insupportable, though candidly acknowledging that no effort of duty or affection has been wanting on my part. He has too painfully convinced me that all these attempts to contribute towards his happiness are wholly useless, and most unwelcome to him. I enclose this letter to my father, wishing it to receive his sanction. Ever yours most affectionately, A. J. Byron."

pp. 225 to 226, note.

Lady Byron.

Extract from a Letter of Lady Byron to Lord Byron.

p. 226. Lady Byron. "Kirkby, 7th February, 1816. You know what I have suffered and would have sacrificed to avoid this extremity, and the strong proofs of duty and attachment I have given by a persevering endurance of the most trying inflictions. After seriously and dispassionately reviewing the misery that I have experienced, almost without interval, from the day of my marriage, I have finally determined on the measure of a separation, which my father was authorized to communicate to you, and to carry into effect. It is, unhappily, your disposition to consider what you *have* as worthless, what you have *lost* as invaluable. But remember that you declared yourself *most miserable* when I was yours. Every expression of feeling, sincerely as it might be made, would here be misplaced. A. J. Byron."

The following testimonies of Thomas Moore and Lady Blessington belong to times after the separation.

From Thomas Moore's Journal between the 3rd of May and 12th of June, 1819.

Thomas Moore. "Murray showed me a letter which Lord Byron had written him, which is to me unaccountable, ex-

cept upon the most ungovernable vanity. He there details to him * * * * * the details of an intrigue in which he says he is at this moment actually engaged with a Venetian girl 'the daughter of one of their noblemen,' whose name is Angelina, and whose age is eighteen, &c., &c.; entering into such details as it would be dishonourable to communicate even to the most confidential friend, and thus completely identifying the poor girl (if indeed any such girl exists) for the edification of Mr. Murray and all the visitors of his shop, to whom it is, of course, intended he shall read the gazette of my lord's last Venetian victory. This is really too gross."

Lord Russell's 'Moore,' vol. ii. p. 329.

From Lady Blessington's 'Conversations,' 1823.

Of love he had strange notions: he said that most people had *le besoin d'aimer*; and that with this *besoin* the first person who fell in one's way contented one.

Lady Blessington. 'Conversations,' p. 155.

It had been shown by Dr. Lushington's judgment, that the cause declared to him by Lady Byron forbade her to return to her husband, and by Lord Byron's words and acts that the declaration, whatever it may have been, was true. Then came Mrs. Stowe's story, followed by the letters of January and February, 1816, and the challenge to produce confirmatory proof of the accusation which she had unhappily published. It should have been enough

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, pp. 415, 563 to 564.

to give the confirmatory proof, to which the 'Quarterly Review' has largely contributed. It is not enough. Every action of Lady Byron's life upon which a false colour could be cast—little offences hoarded through a long course of years—imputation of ill motives to good deeds, have been gathered together to cover the use of such curst terms as were never before addressed by man to woman. In dealing with these charges, some trifling, some weighty, and all illnatured, it is not easy to observe those common courtesies of literature which a great offender against them claims for himself. There are cases in which it would be shameful "to deliberate upon a safe, decorous, and polite manner."

'Quarterly,' October, pp. 428 to 429. 'Medora Leigh,' pp. 221 to 224. The *Daily News*, 2nd Sept. 1869.

In adopting one of two instances, published by a friend of Lady Byron to prove that she was subject to a constitutional idiosyncracy of a most peculiar kind, which rendered her, when under its influence, absolutely and persistently unjust, the 'Quarterly Review' has chanced to omit these words of preface to the ill opinion which, long reserved, was pronounced at so unfortunate a time. "I am sure that Lady Byron was a woman of the most honourable and conscientious intentions." The instance of absolute and persistent injustice is this:—Lady Byron gave the master of her school at Kirkby-Mallory notice to quit, and refused to tell him the cause of his sudden dismissal. The schoolmaster entreated her friend, upon whose recommendation he had been

appointed to the office, to write to her, and endeavour to remove her displeasure, or learn the cause. He refused, with the words:—"Remember Lord Byron! If Lady Byron has taken into her head that you shall go, nothing will turn her." Judged by the common code of manners and customs, the letter itself, apart from the time chosen to publish the story to the world, can hardly be approved. Since Lord Byron had declared that his wife was blameless, and all the fault of the separation lay upon him, it was not well to teach the schoolmaster that the husband had been a sufferer under her absolute and persistent injustice, and to make his acknowledged fault a ground for condemning her, without inquiry, in another case, into which there was so fair an opportunity to inquire. It is possible that there was good cause to dismiss and to refuse to tell the cause of dismissal. Having rejected inquiry, when it might have done good, and could not have harmed the schoolmaster, and having kept silence through Lady Byron's life, it would be hard to find a good cause, or any excuse, good or bad, for casting this mite into the common heap of reproach, at a time when Lady Byron was denounced as a moral Brinvilliers, the poisoner of her husband's reputation. The cry, "Remember Lord Byron," would have better suited the other instance, that which the 'Quarterly Review' does not adopt. Lord Byron disliked to see his wife eat.

Medwin, p. 52.

Her friend is angry because she was sick. A hand, the touch of which was like death, a manner in which there was the silence of the grave, and—after they had partaken of the sacred bread and salt, a spell which should have disarmed the guest—an inability to talk upon a subject which she had nearly at heart, make up the other proof of absolute and persistent injustice. A third small offence is recorded. Lady Byron, greatly troubled by the thoughtlessness of a young and very near relation, sought counsel and comfort from a neighbouring clergyman. Having none to offer, he "ventured to suggest that he did not see how he could be of any use to her under the circumstances." It was plain, from such a speech, that he could not; and she assented. "The pleasure of hearing herself talk on her own merits and sacrifices, was, apparently, her sole motive in sending for him," is the courteous comment of the 'Quarterly Review,' master of an art which John Bunyan notes as a sign of reprobation, and delighting to exercise it rather on the kirtle than the coat. Lady Byron was not happy in her clergymen. Another, to whom she spoke in defence of her conduct, character, and memory, exhorted her to consult a policeman; and, when she did find a learned and discreet minister, she was accused of a design to marry him.

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 426.

Lord Russell's 'Moore,' vol. iv. p. 332.

The 'Quarterly Review' is the probable cause of the publication of an Autobiography of Medora

Leigh, and has, certainly, helped to make the book notorious. Mrs. Stowe, whose 'True Story' was published in September, had spoken of a child over whose wayward nature Lady Byron watched with a mother's tenderness. In the following month the readers of the 'Review' were told that this child had nothing to do with the story, and that any one, knowing who she was, must feel that it had been, in the last degree, wanton and cruel to mention her. The 'Autobiography,' laid by for twenty-six years, and remaining undisturbed notwithstanding Mrs. Stowe's book, seems to have been sent out to satisfy the curiosity thus excited. In October the 'Quarterly Review' directed attention to the child; in October the manuscript was delivered by Mr. S——, the person at whose instance it had been written, to the editor, who gave it to the world. Even then, unless the 'Review' had forced the book into notice, perhaps the print would have been little more heeded than the manuscript. The public might have supposed, as the editor at first supposed, that Medora Leigh was an impostor, and might have neglected the book as a dull invention with an alluring title. But the 'Quarterly Review,' protesting that the story should never have seen the light, and was utterly worthless as an authority, dragged it into day, and adopted and confirmed it, seeming to believe that it established new calumnies against Lady Byron. Considering Lord Byron's

Mrs. Stowe, p. 298.

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 441.

'Medora Leigh,' pp. 5 and 6.

'Quarterly,' January, 1870, p. 235.

Journal and Letters from November, 1813, to September, 1814—the time of Medora Leigh's birth, of which the year, but not the day, is given —the date and contents of his will—the times and places at which the 'Corsair' was written, much from "*existence*"—that in the original manuscript the chief female character was called Francesca, the name being changed to Medora while the poem was in the press—that the mottoes of the three cantos are taken from the tale of Francesca di Rimini—that in the character of Medora the poet delineated an acquaintance whose name is withheld —the seeming quality of the crime for which Conrad is convulsed by impenitent remorse, and in which, judging from her song, Medora was a partaker,— considering all these things, together with Mrs. Stowe's story, the very name could not fail to suggest thoughts which, had the 'Quarterly' been prudent as well as eager, it would not have helped to awaken. In provoking publication of the autobiography, and drawing from it conclusions, not warranted, and most injurious, the 'Review' has compelled those who vindicate Lady Byron to touch upon the history in the third and fourth generations, counting from Captain John Byron, Lady Caermarthen, and Miss Gordon, of the family which Lord Byron was pleased to call the house of Atreus.

Medora Leigh, Lady Byron's niece by marriage,

born in the year 1815, was the fourth child of Mrs. Leigh. Being on a visit to a married sister, far away from home, she was seduced by her brother-in-law, and bore a child at the age of fifteen. The child died, and she returned to the house of her mother, who did not suspect what had happened. Early in the following year, teeming for the second time, she confessed to Mrs. Leigh, and was sent from London, accompanied by her married sister and her brother-in-law, to a house in the country. This she tells without comment. Her mother, perhaps still ignorant of the former offence, must have been at her wit's end how to conceal the new shame from Colonel Leigh—which was the daughter's special wish—and from the world, and must have trusted to professions of repentance and promises for the future. Colonel Leigh, who, according to the 'Quarterly Review,' learned the miserable tale from General Windham, came suddenly to the country house, carried away Medora, and placed her in what seems to have been a private lunatic asylum. At the end of a month she eloped with her brother-in-law to Normandy. At this time, as early as 1831, although she believed that Colonel Leigh *was,* she had been told, by her sister and her brother-in-law, that he was *not* her father.

1815. 'Medora Leigh,' pp. 121 to 129. 1830.

1831.

'Quarterly,' January 1870, p. 235. 1831, June.

July.

After she had lived in adultery for two years she wrote to her mother expressing an earnest desire to

1831, July, to 1834, July.

'Medora Leigh,' pp. 129 to 131.

withdraw into a convent in Lower Brittany, as a boarder. She did so, and Mrs. Leigh allowed her sixty pounds a year. Finding that, for the third time, she was likely to become a mother, and for other reasons, which she does not give, after a

1833, August.

month's residence she went away, without her mother's knowledge, but with the consent of the abbess, who enabled her to deceive Mrs. Leigh by suffering letters to be addressed to her at the con-

1833 to 1838, pp. 131 to 132.

vent as usual. For five years afterwards she lived under the same roof with her brother-in-law, but, as she says, apart from him. They never met alone,

1834, April.

and seldom met at all. About April, 1834, her daughter Marie was born. At that time a relation of the brother-in-law, visiting him, discovered, and informed Mrs. Leigh, that Medora was no longer in a convent. Through four years from the time of that discovery there does not seem to have been any correspondence between the mother and daughter.

1838, Spring. p. 133.

In the spring of the year 1838 Medora was dangerously ill. She wrote to her mother and to an aunt imploring them to enable her to escape from the

Autumn.

cruelty of her seducer. The means were given, and in the autumn of that year she finally left his

1838 to August, 1840.

house, and went to a neighbouring town. For two years she continued to receive most affectionate letters from her mother, who promised to allow her

1839. 'Medora Leigh,' p. 133.

one hundred and twenty pounds yearly. It was probably at this time that, with some difficulty,

Mrs. Leigh was persuaded to execute a deed directing the future payment of three thousand pounds as a provision for Marie. The editor supposes that this was a joint gift of Mrs. Leigh and Lady Byron. It was the act of Mrs. Leigh alone. On Lord Byron's marriage he had made a settlement of sixty thousand pounds, charged upon Newstead. It is probable that Lady Byron was to have the income of the money, if she survived him, during the remainder of her life, and that, if there were no son of the marriage, a part, at least, of the principal sum was to return to him, or his representatives. By his will he gave all that he had to Mrs. Leigh for her life, and afterwards to be divided, at her pleasure, among her children. No part of the sixty thousand pounds could be paid to any child so long as either the aunt or the mother lived, for they were entitled, in succession, to the income. Looking at the time of Medora Leigh's birth, and at the date of the will, it may be thought that she was a special object of Lord Byron's care. Although Mrs. Leigh could not give any part of the money for Marie's benefit—her power was to give it among her children only—nor could require from her daughter a pledge in the child's favour as a condition of the gift—for that would have made the deed void—yet the three thousand pounds was asked and given for the benefit of Marie, and was regarded as a sacred trust for her. Mrs. Leigh retained the deed, so that

p. 94.

Moore, vol. vi. p. 284. 'Medora Leigh,' p. 158.

1815. July 29.

1839. pp. 133, 108.

the future portion might not easily be sold for present pottage. But it was Medora's, and the right to the money, at the appointed time, was absolutely hers by law, though, in conscience, it belonged to her child.

1840. pp. 133 to 135. The mother did not, so the daughter says, perform her promise to pay the yearly one hundred and twenty pounds. It is more probable that the daughter exceeded her allowance, for she was careless and improvident. Early in the year 1840 she was in want, and was advised that unless she wished to return to her brother-in-law, with whom she was still in communication, she must sell the right to receive at a future day the three thousand pounds, the provision for Marie. She applied to Sir George Stephen, who was the solicitor of a company in London that bought reversions. He must have told her that she could not sell until she had the deed, with which Mrs. Leigh was unwilling to part, for she had kept it to prevent the very thing which her daughter was now attempting. At last Medora wrote to Sir George, saying she was sure that her aunt, Lady Byron, would use her influence to persuade Mrs. Leigh to give up the deed. From the year 1830 down to this time there is no trace of intercourse between the sisters-in-law. According to the 'Quarterly Review' Mrs. Leigh had shunned Lady Byron in consequence of a quarrel about money. It is not likely that the aunt knew what

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 441. January, 1870, pp. 233 to 234, 249.

had happened in Colonel Leigh's family while the mother was ignorant, nor afterwards so long as *he* was kept in ignorance; and if *they* were fain to submit to Medora's living abroad with her brother-in-law, how could Lady Byron interfere during that period of five years, or in the two following years, when, separated from him, Medora was under her mother's care?

But now, at the end of ten years, having escaped from her betrayer, being without the means of living, and, uncertain whether to return to him, or to sell her child's portion, she asked Lady Byron to help her. Lady Byron might well have stood aloof. There was no tie of kindred between them, and the ties of marriage and friendship had been severed by the separation and the quarrel. Medora's guilt might have been thought a bar, not easy to be surmounted, between her and the woman who is allowed to have been the purest of the pure. There was yet another bar, which seemed absolutely insurmountable. Lady Byron knew—in controversy, it may be more fit to say she believed without doubt—that Medora Leigh was the daughter of Lord Byron. It might have been expected that his wife would turn from her with aversion and horror. But Lady's Byron's way was not the way of the world. Her overflowing and unwearied bounty, her patience and forbearance, notwithstanding the astounding ingratitude of Medora, may help to in-

terpret the letters of January and February. Medora had been guilty of an offence, the same in kind, though less hideous, than that which Mrs. Stowe imputes to her mother. Lady Byron believed in the hateful parentage. Yet her conduct towards the daughter displayed the same pity and affection which, in the letters, are assumed to be inconsistent with a knowledge of the repented guilt of a past time.

p. 237. The 'Quarterly Review' sneers and chuckles at the thought that the pious, or philanthropic, project ended in a lamentable relapse. But Lady Byron, suffering the reproach of Medora Leigh, and fated to suffer that of the 'Quarterly,' was not without reward. Her niece never returned to the bondage from which she had been set free, and the child's portion was preserved.

1840. August. 'Medora Leigh,' p. 135. Lady Byron was in France when the letter to Sir George Stephen came to her hands. She sent money to enable Medora to leave the neighbourhood of her brother-in-law, and a physician—for she was ill,—to bring her to Tours, where they met. Medora

pp. 136 to 137. pp. 156 to 157. was received with great affection, and such over care that she afterwards complained of the attempt to waken in her a taste for delicacies, which her broken health required. From Tours they went togother to Paris, where Ada and her husband, Lord Lovelace, visited them, and Lady Lovelace received her as a

1841, May. pp. 137, 141. sister. In the following year they returned to England. Mrs. Leigh was compelled by a suit

in Chancery to give up the deed, and then Medora rebelled. She had learned that she was Lord Byron's daughter, and seems to have thought that something more might have been extorted from her mother by the fear of exposure. Although, without cost or risk, she had gotten to the uttermost all that belonged to her, she complained that the suit had been concluded without consulting her, and in a way to show that the promises which she had received were not sincere—she had been sacrificed to her mother's interest. Therefore she determined to leave England, and asked for the means to go. As she would not be dissuaded, Lady Byron spoke of the necessity of her having a lady to live with her abroad. This she rejected. She had never professed that she would submit to any such restraint, and she would not. In July, 1842, she left England attended by a female servant, whose husband, upon Medora's request, because she was not in health, Lady Byron permitted to accompany them on their journey to Hyères, in the south of France. To these two persons she told the secret of her birth. She had informed Lady Byron that she believed it would be impossible to live upon the proposed allowance, one hundred and fifty pounds a year; that she would not, as in the past, suffer poverty and privation; that whatever sum in addition should be necessary for her health and Marie's education, she should endeavour to procure in some other way. Lady Byron replied by asking

1842, May. p. 141. p. 138. July. pp. 139, 140. p. 147. p. 139.

how could she imagine that she would be suffered to
p. 140. want, and assured her, so says Medora, of affection by words, and of unmerited and unjust mistrust by actions, such as requiring that the confidential female servant should render an account of the money which Lady Byron was to supply. Yet Medora was anxious not to judge hastily, and hoped that when Lady Byron's health improved—for she, too, was sick—she would be more just and reasonable. Lord
p. 141. and Lady Lovelace approved of her leaving England. Ada, with an assurance of Lady Byron's love, promised to watch over and protect her. The
p. 150. deed was left in the care of Lord Lovelace, probably as a trust for Marie.

pp. 142 to 147. She loitered on her way to the south of France, and wasted money. On her arrival at Hyères, the courier, whom she calls her man servant, refused to leave her, and prepared to profit by the secret. Her calls for money not being answered so freely or so speedily as she wished, and being unable to trust or value the expressions of affection which she re-
pp. 101 to 102. ceived from Lady Byron,—whose letters were most
p. 147. affectionate, motherly, and considerate,—by the advice of the two servants, she spent Lady Byron's money in travelling with them and her child to Paris to consult with the celebrated French advocate,
1843, March. M. Berryer, how she might extort a more certain and suitable arrangement. She wrote to Lady Byron as briefly as possible, telling nothing more than that

it had been her pleasure to go to Paris. M. Berryer promised that he also would write, but as he did not keep pace with Medora's expectancy, she wrote again, explaining the purpose of her journey. No answer was returned to her letters, but she received money from Lady Byron's friends in Paris, and in May a Dr. King went over, and, after some days' dispute and calculation, offered her, from Lady Byron, three hundred pounds a year upon conditions which she refused. At that time a Captain de B——, whom she had known in the south of France, appeared in Paris. By his advice she resolved to appeal to Lady Byron in person. With means which he furnished, and preceded, accompanied, or closely followed by him, she came to London, where he maintained her for three months. Upon her arrival he interceded for her, in a letter to Lady Byron, in which the small sums that he had lent were casually mentioned. His motives were distrusted, and a solicitor waited on him with a cold denial of his claim for reimbursement. The deed was delivered to Medora, probably by the hands of Sir George Stephen, who certainly visited her; and she proposed to sell her reversionary interest for any sum, however moderate, which it would yield in the market.

May. p. 148 to 150.

pp. 110, 118, 152, 158.

June.

pp. 110, 111, 116, 118, 157.

pp. 153, 102, 108, 112, 115, 94, 105.

The direct appeal to Lady Byron having failed, Medora had recourse to a man of high rank, her uncle by marriage, who wrote twice in reply, advising her "not to reject Lady Byron's kindness,

pp. 102, 153.

liberality, and generosity." Captain de B——, in the course of a business visit to his London correspondents,* happened to tell Medora's history. One of them, Mr. S., with the benevolent design of restoring Medora to her place in Lady Byron's affection, wrote to Lord Lovelace on the subject of the small sums which Captain de B—— had expended; Lord Lovelace declined to interfere. Then Mr. S. sought and had interviews with Dr. Lushington, in which, not mentioning the small sums, he dwelt much on the importance of guarding against publicity, for the sake of peace of mind to Lady Byron and Lady Lovelace; of keeping Medora in the hands of her present advisers, who had no thought of obtaining anything by threat, or terror, or extortion, and preserving her from persons who might do infinite mischief to every member of the Byron family. To an intimation from Dr. Lushington that perhaps other members of the Byron family might be inclined to help Medora, he replied that if she succeeded in obtaining means of subsistence from any other source than Lady Byron, it was clear that there was an end of all obligation and circumspection as regarded her and her daughter; and that the French courier who had

pp. 93, 116, 94.

July 7.

pp. 110, 111, 117.

July 9.

July 21.

pp. 98 to 106; 94, 113, 103.

pp. 104 to 105.

p. 147.

* The nature of their business does not appear. It seems that they were not his army agents in ordinary (pp. 163-4). Mr. S. was the active partner in this affair. The autobiography, which, in October, 1869, he gave to the editor of 'Medora Leigh,' was written for him (pp. 5, 6, 92 to 96, 119).

advised the journey to Paris was in London, and had threatened that, in order to be arrested and taken to Bow Street, where he could publish the story through the newspapers, he would insult or assault Lord Lovelace. The meaning of these friendly warnings could not have been misunderstood, even if Medora's new friends had not afterwards planned a visit to the police-office. Dr. Lushington would not notice the danger of driving Medora to desperation. He said that Lady Byron deeply pitied her, but all hope of interview or letter must be abandoned. If Mr. S. would take his advice, though he had no authority for giving it, he would go to Sir George Stephen. There was a chance, and it was the only chance, that *he* might effect something favourable—*he* might have access to other members of the family. Dr. Lushington was not at liberty to say more. Mr. S. would understand him. And then he repeated the advice to go to Sir George Stephen. Mr. S. tried hard, but failed, to establish a communication with Lady Byron through Dr. Lushington.

pp. 163 to 164. pp. 103 to 104. pp. 101, 106. pp. 103 to 104. p. 105. p. 104.

Acting, reluctantly, upon this advice, Mr. S. had several interviews with Sir George Stephen, who offered his mediation with Medora Leigh's friends, for the purpose of obtaining for her a permanent and comfortable home in France. In a letter, written after these meetings, Sir George said that from Lady Byron personally he could expect

p. 106. August 9. pp. 107 to 110.

nothing more than co-operation with others; he was confident that none of the noble persons to whom his appeal must be made would listen to it unless full atonement were first made to her wounded feelings. The great cause of offence was that she had disclosed the history of her life, especially of her birth, to her French servants, to M. Berryer, to Mr. Bulwer, of the British Embassy in Paris, to Captain de B——, and also to Mr. S., who, in the spirit of the intended visit to Bow Street, reminded Lady Byron that the imparting *power* to disclose the secret would assuredly be viewed by third persons as of very questionable propriety. Sir George refused to undertake the office of mediator unless the deed were surrendered to trustees as a sacred provision for Marie—a condition which Lady Byron could, although Mrs. Leigh could not, lawfully make—and unless Medora gave a written expression of sorrow for the offences against Lady Byron, together with the promise of a return to seclusion in France. Medora was willing to express any contrition that might be dictated, and to come under reasonable obligation as to her future manner of life; but she refused, point blank, to surrender the deed on any conditions whatever; a refusal which, after she had made fruitless applications to her own family, Mr. S. softened, by saying that she objected to give up the deed without an irrevocable provision for herself. She was proposing to sell it

pp. 116, 139, 105, 147, 151, 119.

p. 108.

pp. 112, 114.

pp. 114 to 115.

p. 105.

for present purposes, taking no care for to-morrow. He seemed now to be more earnest for Captain de B—— than for Medora. It was not for him, he said, to express any opinion on the conduct of Lady Byron, although he had the misfortune to differ widely from Sir George Stephen as to the degree of blame to be attributed to Medora: but he was amazed that delicacy and honour did not constrain Lady Byron's family and connections, especially Lord Lovelace, to forbid that Captain de B.'s pitying charity and Christian benevolence should be a drain upon a pocket much smaller than his humanity.

p. 116 to 117.

p. 110.

pp. 94, 113.

Lady Byron had extended pity and forgiveness to the extreme limit. She would not pretend to restore to her confidence a woman unthankful, and whom it was impossible to trust; who had betrayed her own shame, and had done infinitely worse, in the hope of extorting what she reckoned to be a suitable provision for herself, and who was now seeking the same end by the threat of publishing her story to the world. That Lady Byron's conduct throughout was approved by Mrs. Leigh's family, that her kindness, liberality, and generosity were gratefully acknowledged by them, appears from the letters of the uncle and of Sir George Stephen, the former mentioned, the latter copied in the autobiography. She was still ready to help, but she was not to be moved by threat. She would do

pp. 153, 109, 110.

nothing, unless Marie's fortune were made safe, and she refused to grant the irrevocable provision which would have left Medora unrestrained, to be hurried to destruction by her own perverse folly, guided by evil counsel.

Aug. 9 to Sept. 4. Within a month after the date of his letter, Sir George Stephen had some unavailing meetings with Mr. S. Lady Byron was firm, and the niece immoveable. Medora began to execute her threats, p. 158. protesting that Lady Byron had driven her onward, p. 102. had dared her to disclose. She had already, in June or July, written to one uncle, and now she wrote letters to her mother, and to other relations on the mother's side. She sent, as it seems, on the August 12. pp. 159, 160, 156, 161. 12th of August, several of these letters, among them one to Mrs. Leigh, asking to see her, and another to an uncle, a man of the highest rank, he who, being at Genoa in the year 1823, had mortified Countess of Blessington, pp. 4, 39, 40. Lord Byron by failing to call upon him. From this uncle she sought protection and help, and permission to tell him why she needed both. With a brief reply he sent her 10*l.*, but did not accept August 13 or 14. the offered story. On the 13th or 14th of August, probably on Sunday, the 13th, she went to the house of her mother, who was denied in the usual August 14. form:—"Not at home." On the 14th she wrote three letters, which were not answered, one to her mother and two to cousins. She reminded the cousins that they had been fond of her when she

was a happy child, and asked—would they now refuse to hear why she was in misery, and to give her aid and protection? These three letters were not sent until on or after the 16th of August. Mr. S. and his partner thought the letter to Mrs. Leigh very proper and natural under the circumstances; but is it not (they asked Captain de B.) somewhat premature? A day or two may make an important change, and we think a short time may yet be given for answers to the letters already sent. The letter to Mrs. Leigh was sent, probably, within a few days after the 16th of August, certainly before the 20th of September. The editor of the autobiography does not agree with Mr. S. and his partner that it was very proper and natural. He pronounces it to have been haughty, unfilial, and cruel, the most painful of all the documents in this unhappy case; that it must have been written under deep feelings of irritation, caused by the mother's refusal to see her daughter, and was of such a nature that, after mature deliberation, he determined that it should not be published.

August 16. 'Medora Leigh,' p. 160.

Between August 16 and September 20. p. 162.

Medora ended the correspondence with her relations by a letter, dated on the 23rd of August, acknowledging the receipt of the ten pounds, and thrusting upon her uncle the story which he had refused to receive. Perhaps this was the letter, it will be noticed again, which brought forth an indignant denial from Mrs. Leigh, mentioned in

August 23, pp. 156 to 159.

September 20, p. 163. the 'Quarterly.' Mr. S—— and Captain de B—— were now brought to extremity. Nothing remained but to pay the threatened visit to the pp. 164, 166. police magistrate. Captain de B—— declared that he was ready, and Mr. S—— does not deny that he had promised to be one of the company. While they October 12. were consulting on this last great operation, Medora disappeared. Like the uneasy patient, with whose pancreatic juices benevolent physicians were experimenting, she escaped out of their hands, bearing with her the little Marie and the deed. Finding that her disclosures and threats of disclosure had failed, she was shrewd enough to know that her interest did not lie in breaking down the last bridge that gave access to her family, and selling her reversion to repay the small sums to Captain de pp. 113. 165. B——. Mr. S——, astonished that his endeavours were unsuccessful, regards the failure as contradicting the statement that Lady Byron's motherly tenderness never ceased; and the 'Quarterly 'Quarterly,' January, 1870. p. 237. Review' tells us that she never forgave Medora, who died in 1847, having been supported during the last four years of her life by a maternal relative. Confidence was not, nor could have been restored, unless Lady Byron had been weaker than the weakest of womankind: but it is not necessary to believe that forgiveness was withheld. Medora knew, from the conversations of Mr. S—— with Dr. Lushington and Sir George Stephen, that while

Lady Byron would not renew direct intercourse, she was ready to join with others in providing a permanent and comfortable home. It is probable that she escaped from the benevolence of her new friends to Sir George—the minister, as well of Lady Byron as of "the high circle" to which, on the mother's side, Medora belonged. Her maternal relations may have thought it well for her to believe that she had lost all power over and all influence with Lady Byron, who, keeping "in the background" for a good purpose, did possibly contribute to the supply which seemed to come from one of them alone. It is certain that she rescued Medora from her brother-in-law, and probable that she saved the child's portion, not only for a time, but to the last.

It was a vain thought that this story could be used to defame Lady Byron, and then flung aside contemptuously, as of no avail for her vindication, annihilated by the words, "Even the small portion of it (about twenty pages) that bears the slightest semblance of authenticity is utterly worthless as an authority." The testimony of the book in her favour should have some weight, because it was not written with friendly intentions towards her. The editor is a fellow-worker with the 'Quarterly' to justify Lord Byron, though not to condemn his wife. He holds that the poet would be acquitted in the law courts, as he already stands acquitted in the courts of honour and conscience:

p. 235.

'Medora Leigh,' pp. 239, 198, 234.

but there is some measure in his illusion. He believes nothing worse of Lady Byron than that she was the victim of a strange hallucination, born of a peculiar jealousy. The 'Review' has authenticated the outlines of the story to multitudes by whom it would never otherwise have been known. The readers of the 'Quarterly' have learned that in the year 1830, Medora, a daughter of Mrs. Leigh, at a very early age was the mother of a child of which her sister's husband was the father—that for some time the shame was concealed from Colonel Leigh—that, ten years afterwards, Lady Byron brought her to Paris, and there, or at Fontainebleau, told her that Lord Byron was her father—that there is extant a letter from Mrs. Leigh to a distinguished relative, repelling with the deepest indignation an atrocious charge of which Medora is said to have been the author, and which is not the charge published by Mrs. Stowe *—that Lady Byron introduced her into English society, although warned of the danger of doing so by her family and her lawyers—that during three years Mrs. Jameson assisted in her so-called reformation—that Medora seemed to have no sense of right or wrong—that the power to tell from whom she had learned the secret of her parentage was shown on occasions in a manner so haughty and overbearing as to astonish beholders—

'Quarterly,' January, 1870, pp. 235 to 237.

* Nor is it the charge made known to Dr. Lushington, whatever that may have been.

that, because she was dangerous and grew troublesome, her aunt took measures to establish her abroad, which were frustrated by constant calls for money, instigated by a valet and his wife who had been placed about her—that Lady Byron offered her three hundred pounds a year on conditions which she would not accept — that, afterwards, Medora made applications to the Leigh family and their connections, which were made in vain, excepting that an uncle sent her ten pounds—and that the letter printed as her reply to him reads more like the letter of a distressed needlewoman than that of a young woman of birth and education. After thus telling the story from beginning to end, the 'Review' concludes:—"The paragraph that has been going the round of the papers, stating that her story was received by everybody as true, is a sheer invention of the writer. It was treated with contempt by everybody, with the exception of those who hoped to profit by it, and of Lady Byron." Why should a knowledge of the time when, and some of the circumstances in which Lady Byron told, in the year 1840, what she had refused to deny to Mrs. Villiers in the year 1816, be treated with contempt, especially by the 'Review,' which, a little while ago, was appealing to Mrs. Stowe for help to solve the problem, "at what period Lady Byron first specified the charge?" Treated with contempt by everybody? Was it treated with con-

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 565.

tempt by M. Berryer, Mr. Bulwer, Miss Davison, Miss Doyle, Dr. King, Lord and Lady Lovelace, Dr. Lushington, Sir George Stephen, and Mrs. Jameson? Treated with contempt? Why the 'Quarterly' had finished the same story in the preceding line. Is it meant that the affirmation of the paternity was treated with contempt? Medora Leigh did not profess to tell her birth from her own knowledge; she said that she had learned it from Lady Byron, and the 'Review' had but just declared:—"She told this unhappy girl." The editor of the autobiography has withheld but one letter from the press—the cruel letter from the daughter—and offers to show all the papers on which his narrative is founded. The 'Quarterly Review,' withholding bales of letters necessary for the full discovery of the truth, and not offering to produce the few, which, for a special purpose, are printed in whole or in part, hopes that "the character of this review" will protect the affectation of contempt for a story, of which the materials, though thrown together with too little regard to order, bear all the marks of truth, which is supported by produced letters, and the main parts of which are allowed to be true. The 'Review' does not condescend to particulars: all "is a sheer invention." Yet there is no profession of unbelief in the existence either of Mr. S—— (the living witness from whom the editor received papers) or

'Medora Leigh,' p. 96. The 'Quarterly Review,' January, 1870, pp. 220, 222, 228, 229, 233. October, 1869, p. 563.

of the original documents left with the publisher. Are not the memorandum which Mr. S—— made of a conversation with Dr. Lushington—Sir George Stephen's letter — the letter to Sir George — Medora's letter, mentioned by the 'Quarterly Review,' that letter which acknowledged the receipt of the ten pounds—her letters to her cousins, authentic? Among those to whose authority the 'Review' appeals is one who can, perhaps, confirm the statement that an uncle of Medora twice wrote, asking that she would not reject Lady Byron's kindness, liberality, and generosity.

'Medora Leigh,' pp. 101 to 106, 107 to 110, 113 to 118, 156 to 159, 161.

The 'Quarterly Review' spread abroad the story for the purpose of heaping reproach upon Lady Byron. 1st. Because for ten years she neglected this unhappy girl, and then suddenly brought her to Paris. 2nd. That she bore with her haughtiness and overbearing insolence because she was afraid that she would reveal a secret entrusted to her, and when she found her grow troublesome and dangerous, took means to establish her abroad. 3rd. That Lady Byron encouraged an unnatural invention that Mrs. Leigh had co-operated for Medora's ruin by her brother-in-law. 4th. That she told Medora the revolting story of her alleged paternity, a story incapable of proof, and if it had been true no justifiable motive could have been found for the disclosure. Of these accusations in their turn, giving them in the very words of the 'Review.'

p. 153.

'Quarterly,' January, 1870, p. 235.

1st. "Lady Byron, having known all about this unhappy girl for ten years without making any effort for reclaiming her, suddenly sent for her in the autumn of 1840, and brought her to Paris."

The offence of disclosing the secret is aggravated by supposing that it was made to an "unhappy girl." Would a reader, who knew nothing more of the story than is found in the pages of the accuser, imagine that this unhappy girl was a woman of twenty-five years of age, who had borne, at least, two children, and had lived for years in the commission of an offence of the same kind, though not so revolting as that which was disclosed to her? But Lady Byron had "known all about this unhappy girl for ten years." Can this be so? The mother did not know until her daughter was expecting the birth of a second child; nor Colonel Leigh until three months afterwards, when he carried her away to an asylum, from which she eloped to unnamed places in Normandy and Britanny. No proof is offered that during any part of the ten years Lady Byron knew anything of her niece. The sisters-in-law had quarrelled at the very beginning of the period, and the indirect request for Lady Byron's influence, made through Sir George Stephen, implies that the families were estranged. And was the sudden summons a caprice? Are the words of the 'Quarterly' well chosen to convey the truth, that Lady Byron interposed at the request of Medora,

and when she was in danger of returning to her brother-in-law, and was endeavouring to sell her reversion?

2nd. "Lady Byron kept in the background, playing off Medora Leigh as her instrument, till that young lady became aware of her importance and began to grow dangerous. She had a secret on her side to keep or reveal, as best suited her, namely that Lady Byron was her informant; and we have been told by eye-witnesses that her conduct to Lady Byron was on occasions haughty and overbearing to an extent for which, at the time, they were unable to account." p. 236.

"Yet she held by her till the summer of 1843, when, finding her growing troublesome, Lady Byron took measures for establishing her abroad."

"Mrs. Jameson co-operated with Lady Byron during three years in that so-called reformation of Medora." p. 237

It was in July 1842, not 1843, that Medora Leigh left England, on her way to Hyères. She came to England in May 1841, remained here fourteen months, went away on the 22nd of July 1842, and never again saw Lady Byron. The three years co-operation seems to be an enlargement upon Mrs. Stowe's two years of convulsive wrestling, and there is, perhaps, less excuse for the carelessness of the 'Review,' writing from authentic documents, and supported by family authority. But there is some-

thing more than carelessness in attributing Lady Byron's forbearance to fear. So far was she from being moved by threat, that, on the moment when disclosure was threatened, she renounced all personal intercourse with Medora; and she showed no fear of exposure when she refused to offer any terms, unless—a thing which in no way concerned her interest—Marie's portion were made secure. In the face of Medora's own story, that she herself determined to leave England because she had been sacrificed in the chancery suit, that she *would* go in defiance of the earnest and repeated entreaty of her aunt,* it was very bold to say that Lady Byron took means to establish her niece abroad, because she grew troublesome. But the dread "We" cannot afford to be fallible. Having affirmed, with a groom-born jest about a vicious horse, that Lady Byron never forgave, it was impossible to attribute her patience, and forbearance, and free bounty to a noble motive; and for those who would level goodness of a high order, it was as easy to ascribe long-

'Medora Leigh,' pp. 137, 138.]

'Quarterly,' January, 1870, p. 235.

* "All this rendered me the more desirous to comply with Lady Byron's earnest wish that I should not leave her, which, she used to say, would cost her her life." "I openly expressed to Lady Byron all I felt, and my determination of leaving England immediately, and solicited from her (Lady Byron) the means to do so. She again continued, as ever, saying that it was for her to provide, as Lord Byron would have done, &c., &c.; but on finding that the impression I had received was not to be done away with, she spoke of the necessity of my having a lady to live with me abroad. This I rejected."—Medora Leigh, 'Autobiography,' pp. 137–8.

suffering, under the haughty and overbearing temper of an unthankful ward, to coward fear, as it would be to suggest that Philip Sydney gave the cup of cold water to the dying soldier because the enemy had poisoned the wells.

3rd. Lady Byron "repeated, as coming from her," (Medora) "the most monstrous and improbable calumnies against her mother, as having co-operated with her sister for her (Medora's) ruin by her brother-in-law! Did Lady Byron believe such stuff? Should she have repeated it, if she had believed it? Should she openly have adopted and patronised the girl in a manner to become responsible for her unnatural inventions, which were evidently accumulated as they were found to be acceptable? They reached the Leigh family, and there is extant a letter from Mrs. Leigh to a distinguished relative, repelling with the deepest scorn and indignation, 'this atrocious charge.' Lady Byron kept in the background, playing off Medora Leigh as her instrument." p. 236.

Not a shred of proof is offered that any such monstrous and improbable calumny was encouraged, or repeated, nor, indeed, that it was uttered. A time should have been named, for that would have added to the means of disproving "this atrocious charge" against Lady Byron. So far as appears, the calumny is the invention not of Medora Leigh but of the 'Quarterly Review.' If the letter to the

distinguished relative were written after the journey to Paris, in March 1843, to consult M. Berryer, or after July 1842, the time of the final parting between Lady Byron and Medora Leigh; or, even, after the previous month of May, when Medora rebelled against the decree in Chancery, what will be thought of the "atrocious charge" that this unnatural invention was encouraged by Lady Byron or was acceptable to her? It does not appear that it was ever made. It is possible, that in her haughty and unfilial letter Medora complained of the want of watchful care over her childhood, and she may have cruelly suggested that there had been the less care because the crime was thought venial. It is most improbable that she made, in that letter, the atrocious charge alleged by the 'Quarterly Review,' because, if it had been there, Mr. S., who had in his hands the autobiography showing that there was no ground for such a charge, could hardly have pronounced the letter to be natural and proper. But it is said that the monstrous calumny reached the Leigh family, and so called forth Mrs. Leigh's letter to the distinguished relative. This seems to point to the letter of the 23rd of August, 1843, acknowledging the receipt of the ten pounds; a letter written when Medora's dull hatred was divided between her mother and Lady Byron, and, certainly, not meant to be acceptable to either. That letter does not

contain the charge repelled with deep scorn and indignation, nor anything approaching it, nothing touching the subject, beyond a spiteful way of saying that the writer had been suffered to visit a married sister:—"Ruined (she writes) at the age of fifteen, by the unprincipled man to whom I was exposed, by those whose duty it was to watch over and to protect me." This is nothing more than an unreasonable complaint of want of caution. If she had meant to charge her mother with any such horrible plot as the 'Quarterly Review' mentions, she would not have used a mincing phrase. But the letter does make, and repeats in the plainest words, the charge published by Mrs. Stowe:— "Teaching me all I had yet to learn of the infamy of the mother once so dearly loved—that I owed my birth to incest and adultery." And again: "The only resource for existence I have is a deed of appointment for £3000 payable at the death of Lady Byron and my mother, the sole provision made for me out of the large property she received from my father—and her brother—Lord Byron." the 'Quarterly Review' does not tell us that *this* charge was repelled. The accusation denied with scorn and indignation does not seem to have been made; the accusation which certainly was made does not seem to have been denied.

'Medora Leigh,' p. 156.

p. 157.

p. 158.

4th. "Lady Byron" "brought her to Paris, and there or at Fontainebleau told her the revolting

'Quarterly,' January, 1870,

pp. 235, 236. story of her alleged paternity." "The story was utterly incapable of proof." "No amount of suspicion could justify any one in repeating it as a fact." "She knew, moreover, that no imaginable good could be attained by such a revelation; that nothing but unqualified evil could result from it. We defy Mrs. Beecher Stowe, or the most perverted moralist of her school, to suggest a good or justifiable motive for what Lady Byron did. She not only told this unhappy girl—whose sense of right and wrong seems utterly lost and confused on all subjects—that she was the child of incest, but repeated, as coming from her, the most monstrous and improbable calumnies against her mother."

To repeat a monstrous and improbable calumny is not, of necessity, a fault. Until time and circumstance are added, and proof shown, it is enough to reply to these last words that, as yet, the 'Quarterly Review' seems to be the mother of the unnatural invention. It has been already said, that, considering the nature of the communication, to call Medora *a girl*, was an abuse of the word; nor should it have been forgotten that, as early as the year 1831, she had been told by her sister and her brother-in-law that Colonel Leigh was not her father—that she lived with her brother-in-law for seven years afterwards, and must have learned all that he knew or suspected. She had not heard the name of her supposed father, and, in her seclusion, had not

opportunity to learn. But the time had come at which she could inquire, and it was scarcely possible that she should not seek to know. There was danger in the search, for, like De Foe's Susan, she was of a nature to pursue it without regard to consequences. She says that Lady Byron exacted her confidence to the most unlimited extent. In seeking confidence, confidence would be given, perhaps, at first unconsciously; and Lady Byron's scrupulous regard to truth, which until July, 1869, was never questioned, would help Medora to discover that she *could* tell if she *would*. The whole truth might be less dangerous than the half. The mind most exquisite to forebode evil, could not have foreseen that any human creature would be so dead to her own shame, and to the shame of her father and mother, as Medora proved. Without accepting a challenge in the character of a most perverted moralist—who, indeed, would be more ready to consecrate the husband than to justify the wife—it may be repeated, that it is unreasonable to call for motives while the evidence in which they are to be sought is withheld. Common sense, uninstructed, might be safely defied to find a good motive for inoculating a baby with a deadly disease; especially if the child died. A book of conjectures might be written, all suggesting good motives, and the most improbable of all would be less unlikely than the conjecture that Lady Byron spoke for an evil purpose. The motive will be one day known,

'Medora Leigh,' p. 136.

and meanwhile, reasonable and just people will rest assured upon what is known of her. Why should it be said that the story was utterly incapable of proof? Might not something "have been collected from servants or from observation?" Was confession impossible? The thought that will run through, through the argument of the 'Quarterly,' the thought that comes from knowledge of the guilt, breaks out in telling that Lady Byron resembled Caleb Williams in one respect, in having no evidence to produce in support of her worst charges. Falkland made a full confession to Caleb Williams, though he did not justify the offence with all the sophistry of his powerful mind. There is confession in the warning given by Lord Byron and Mrs. Leigh, that Lady Byron's unsupported depositions would not be sufficient; and so, also, in the defiance of the 'Quarterly Review.' Bystanders might well argue that an accusation was incapable of proof, and that, true or false, nothing but unqualified evil could result from it. But is that the argument of persons falsely accused, or of their advocate? What would be said of a man charged with a foul offence if, instead of taking his accuser by the throat, he were to argue with him: "The charge is incapable of proof, and I defy you to find a good motive for the accusation?" However, proof, and to spare, is to be found; much of it provided by the 'Quarterly Review.'

'Quarterly,' January, 1870, pp. 234, 236, 245, 246, 248.

The evidence from Lord Byron's Journals and

Letters has been given in the preceding paper, 'The Bride of Abydos.' The evidence of his poems from 1813 to 1817 will be found in the Review which follows these Notes.

Thomas Moore, says, that some people will believe anything. Few people will believe that unless Lady Byron had known the story to be true, she would have told it to Medora Leigh, and to Lord Lovelace, and to Lady Lovelace, and to Dr. Lushington, and to Sir George Stephen, and that one and all would have received it with undoubting faith. Telling of her residence in Paris with Lady Byron in the year 1841, Medora says:—"At the latter period of this time, Ada and Lord Lovelace came over, and I received kindness and promises from both, and was made to feel that I was to be Ada's sister in all things, as I was really." And again, when she was about to leave England, in July, 1842:—"After consultation with Ada and Lord Lovelace, it was thought best I should leave, and Ada promised, and I thought I might trust to such, to watch over and protect me, assuring me her mother was deeply attached to me." Dr. Lushington received the story as an understood fact. Sir George Stephen, acting on behalf of Mrs. Leigh's family, wrote: "I *personally* know the motive as well as the extent of the kindness that she" (Lady Byron) "has shown to Miss Leigh, and there are very few, certainly not more than three, who know it as well."

'Medora Leigh,' pp. 136, 137.

pp. 140, 141.

p. 99.

p. 109.

'Quarterly,' January, 1870, p. 236. 'Medora Leigh,' pp. 135, 136, 116, 157, 158.

Medora Leigh was informed by Lady Byron, and repeated to several persons, that she was the daughter of Lord Byron. In August, 1843, she wrote to Mrs. Leigh's brother by the half blood, telling him that she had heard from Lady Byron all that she had to learn of her mother's infamy; she spoke of Lord Byron as her father without question, and complained that she had too small a share of the large property which Mrs. Leigh had received from him.

'Quarterly,' January, p. 236.

Mrs. Leigh's family heard of monstrous and improbable calumnies, invented by Medora against her mother, of which it seems they told Mrs. Leigh, who wrote to a distinguished relative repelling *an* atrocious charge with the deepest scorn and indignation.

The 'Quarterly Review' is of opinion that, by patronising and adopting Medora, Lady Byron became, in a manner, responsible for her unnatural inventions.

p. 237.

During the four last years of her life, reckoning from about October, 1843, Medora was supported by a maternal relative.

If the story of her birth had been false, would the maternal relative have patronised and adopted her in October, 1843, without disabusing her of the belief in that story which she had repeated in the preceding August? The 'Quarterly Review' is careful to relate "that *an* atrocious charge," nothing to the purpose, and which does not seem to have been made, had been repelled, but is silent as to

any reply to the charge so distinctly made to the uncle. If it had been unfounded, could he have failed to call Lady Byron to a severe account? Is his neglect to visit Lord Byron at Genoa, explained? He would, probably, have repelled the accusation if he had not known it to be true. If he knew it to be true, it is probable that his knowledge was as early as 1816, and that he would avoid Lord Byron in 1823.

Notwithstanding the postscript of October, the 'Quarterly Review' assumes again that the offence published by Mrs. Stowe was the offence told to Dr. Lushington. With strange inconsistency, in the same breath, we are told that Wilmot Horton, on Lady Byron's behalf, distinctly declared, without qualification or reserve, that the charge in which Mrs. Leigh was involved, was not the cause for which reconciliation had been pronounced impossible, and Dr. Lushington is rebuked because he will not declare to the world whether there was brought before him confirmatory proof of the guilty connection which, if Wilmot Horton spoke truly, was not brought before him at all. Truth is not served by this confusion. The 'Quarterly Review' has cleared Lady Byron from the offence of bringing forward a charge which involved Mrs. Leigh, at the very moment when she was lavishing affection upon her, in proving, by the evidence of Wilmot Horton, that she did not bring forward that charge. But it

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, pp. 418, 564, 566. January, 1870, pp. 244, 246. p. 233.

is argued, either she invented an infamous calumny against her husband and his sister, or she encouraged them in their iniquity, laid a trap for them, and so became an accomplice; and stands self-convicted of a long course of dissimulation and hypocrisy. The question of the comparative guilt of calumny or complicity is merrily reserved for the pope. The conclusion is drawn from false premises. It cannot be reckoned among things impossible that an offence should have been repented, forsaken, and pardoned. To assume, not only without proof but without pretext, that because Mrs. Leigh had once been guilty, the offence must have continued to the time when it became known to Lady Byron, and afterwards, is unjust to both. The reviewer adds that, in either case, the blame of eventually giving the story told to Mrs. Stowe, "(if she did give it)" for posthumous publication, must rest upon Lady Byron, and we are reminded of what Dr. Johnson said of the publication of Lord Bolingbroke's works by Mallet.* Scoundrel and coward are the names here fixed upon Lady Byron; and the reproach of vituperating her in a form of words new, as applied to a woman, is not to be avoided by the "(if she did give it.)"

* "Sir, he" (Lord Bolingbroke) "was a scoundrel and a coward; a scoundrel for charging a blunderbuss against religion and morality; a coward because he had no resolution to fire it off himself, but left half a crown to a beggarly Scotchman to draw the trigger after his death."—Boswell's 'Johnson,' Croker, vol. i. p. 255.

There was no room for doubt. Mrs. Stowe had repeatedly declared that the story was not told to her for publication.

Considering the uncivil reason given by Lord Byron's friends for refusing to hold him guilty, upon his own confession—that his intimates, such men as Walter Scott and William Bankes, were at a loss to know how much or how little of his narrative they were to believe—the 'Review' does not add to its repute for skill in weighing evidence, when the husband is pronounced to be more worthy of belief than the wife;* and too yielding a softness is betrayed when, looking at the date of Allegra's birth, there is still a sigh over the tearful tenderness of the 'Farewell,' breathed in fancied sympathy with that Thomas Moore who laughed out at my lord "wailing on the housetop." The laugh was echoed by a greater voice. "I think," said Walter Scott, "my

Moore, vol. vi. pp. 240 to 242.

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 419.

Lockhart's 'Scott,' vol. viii. p. 119.

'Quarterly,' January, 1870, p. 247.

Lord Russell's 'Moore,' vol. ii. p. 192.

* "Another of Byron's peculiarities was the love of mystifying, which, indeed, may be referred to that of mischief. There was no knowing how much or how little to believe of his narratives. Instance:—William Bankes expostulating with him upon a dedication which he had written in extravagant terms of praise to Cam Hobhouse, Byron told him that Cam had bored him about this dedication till he had said, 'Well, it shall be so, provided you will write it yourself,' and affirmed that Hobhouse did write the high-coloured dedication accordingly. I mentioned this to Murray, having the report from Will Rose, to whom Bankes had mentioned it. Murray, in reply, assured me that the dedication was written by Lord Byron himself, and showed it me in his own hand. I wrote to Rose to mention the thing to Bankes, as it might have made mischief had the story got into the circle."—Walter Scott, from *Lockhart's Life*, vol. viii. p. 119.

Lockhart's 'Scott,' vol. v. p. 141.

noble friend is something like my old peacock, who chooses to bivouac apart from his lady, and sit below my bedroom window, to keep me awake with his screeching lamentation; only I own he is not equal in melody to Lord Byron, for 'Fare thee well, and if for ever,' &c., is a very sweet dirge indeed. After all, *c'est génie mal logé*, and that's all that can be said about it."

'Quarterly,' January, 1870. p. 228.

When Lord Byron was made aware of his wife's intention to separate, he was so terribly shaken that his sister expected him to go mad outright. Writhing under some alarming report, he declared existence

p. 231.

to be no longer endurable. The 'Quarterly Review' tells us that before he left England the charge which affected Mrs. Leigh had fallen still-born from contempt, and why? "The answer is given by the frank fearlessness of Lord Byron, and the high

p. 230, note.

character of Mrs. Leigh." Shelley was of a different opinion. His letter, written five months after Lord Byron had left England, shows that the charge had not fallen still-born, but that it would die away, as the certain consequence of Lady Byron's continuing in affectionate intercourse with Mrs. Leigh. Short of denying that it was true, she could not have taken means so sure to silence the world. She would not deny it, and the most incoherent conclusions have been wrought out of her refusal to give

p. 231.

the denial. On the 19th of February, 1816, she wrote to Mrs. Leigh:—"If the report alludes to

anything which I know to be false, I will bear testimony to the falsehood." On the next day, the 20th of February, the day upon which she arrived in London to consult Dr. Lushington, she had the opportunity of bearing testimony to the falsehood of this very charge, if she had known it to be false. Mrs. Villiers, her friend and the intimate friend of Mrs. Leigh, wrote to her telling her of "the report of a guilty connection between the brother and sister." Even if Lady Byron's established reputation is to pass for nothing—and, until July, 1869, no man had dared to impeach her truth and honesty—they must be among Mr. Moore's people that believe anything, who can believe that having resolved, by a visit to Mrs. Leigh at this critical time, to tell the world that no cloud had come over their love, she would have hesitated, though from no better motive than to avoid the appearance of inconsistency, to say that the report was false if she could have said so truly. If she could have denied the report, nothing would have been easier than to answer Mrs. Villiers. Unable to give the denial that had been asked, the task was very difficult. From anything short of direct assurance that the report was false, Mrs. Villiers would conclude that it was true, and that was the conclusion which she must have drawn from the following letter:—

"I deeply regret the reports which have been circulated relative to the cause of the separation 1816, February 20, p. 232.

between Lord B. and myself, and none can occasion me more sorrow than that which you mention as reflecting on Mrs. Leigh's character; but, as I can positively assert that *not one* of the many reports now current have been sanctioned or encouraged by me, my family or my friends, I cannot consider myself in any degree responsible for them.

"During my residence under the same roof with Mrs. Leigh, all my friends have heard me express the most grateful and affectionate sense of her good offices towards me; and, before I left the house, I wrote of her and spoke of her in those terms to every one who was intimate with me.

"In the present state of circumstances, you must be aware that a publication of the *real* grounds of difference between Lord B. and myself would be extremely improper, and, in conformity with the advice I have received, I *must* abstain from any further disclosure."

This letter will not accord with any other supposition than that the reported offence had been committed, repented, and forgiven; and that it was not the cause of separation. Lady Byron carefully forbears to say that the report was untrue, and she tells of gratitude and affection which make it plain that the offence was past, and that she was not, at the time, meditating to publish it to the world. The
p. 233. 'Quarterly Review' imagines some broad line of demarcation between "the many reports now cur-

rent," and the *real* ground of difference, but there is not a word to intimate whether the reports which had not been sanctioned or encouraged were or were not the *real* grounds. The line of demarcation is between the things, whether reported or not, which *were*, and those which were *not*, the *real* grounds. If the report had been false, it would have been base indeed, and especially after the promise of the day before, that she would deny anything known to be false, to answer the question "Is it true?" with the words, "I did not encourage it; I am not responsible." But the 'Review' has found out this new way to prove that the letter was understood, and that Lady Byron meant and knew it to be understood as an unequivocal denial of the report. pp. 232 to 233.

In 1816 Mrs. Villiers asked Lady Byron:—Is a report, unfavourable to Mrs. Leigh, true?

Lady Byron answered, I did not sanction the report, and am not responsible for it. In the present state of circumstances a publication of the *real* grounds of difference would be extremely improper.

Then follow, first the conclusion and next the proof, both of which shall be given in the very words of the review, without adding or taking away one jot.

The Conclusion.

"That this letter was understood to be an unequivocal denial of the report, and that she" (Lady p. 232.

Byron) meant and knew it to be so understood, was proved in the clearest manner many years afterwards.

The Proof.

p. 233. "In the spring of 1830, Lady Byron and Mrs. Leigh quarrelled (we believe about money matters), Mrs. Leigh taking the initiative by declining all further intimacy with Lady Byron. The lady to whom the foregoing letter was addressed, who had continued ever since the common friend of both, undertook to reconcile them, and failed owing to the obduracy of Mrs. Leigh. We have seen letters from Mrs. Villiers to Lady Byron, describing many fruitless efforts to bring 'poor dear Augusta' to reason, and making excuses for her on the ground of the trials to which her temper had been put by the pecuniary embarrassments of her husband and untoward events in her family. The angelic or double-faced theory, therefore, will hardly avail here."

Such incoherence was never found but in a sick man's dream, or in the ramblings of a jester; and the reviewer has taken pains to show that it is all a jest, accusation as well as argument—that he is only playing at condemnation. The reasoning is immediately followed by the judgment: "If any but the fair, frank interpretation is to be put upon this letter, we must cease to regard the writer as a gentlewoman." As though a judge should add to

a sentence of penal servitude for some shameful crime — and none can be more shameful than that which is imputed to Lady Byron:—"and if any but the fair, frank interpretation is to be put upon this letter of yours, I must cease to regard you as a gentleman." The words "you are a scoundrel, and a coward, and no gentlewoman," are odd, and something more, when addressed to a woman, though under cover, and in jest.

The plain sense of this letter is repeated by Messrs. Wharton and Ford, the solicitors of Lady Byron's family. On behalf of her representatives and descendants they deny that the 'True Story' is a complete or authentic statement of the facts connected with the separation, and declare that it cannot be regarded as her own statement, and that it does not contain any direct evidence of her history. But, they do not deny the charge, and therefore the general conclusion has been that they believe it to be true.

Letter to the *Times* Newspaper, 1869, Sept. 2.

In writing to Mrs. Villiers, Lady Byron speaks of the *extreme* perplexities and miseries of her present circumstances. She had resolved to disclose, if she had not, on that very day, disclosed, to Dr. Lushington that cause which made reconciliation impossible. Having disclosed it, she learned—if she had until then doubted, for she might have been, in some degree, enlightened by Mrs. Clermont—that duty to God and man forbade her to return to her hus-

1816, February 20, p. 232.

band. Governed by fixed rules and principles, she
p. 228. fulfilled her duty, braving the most terrible of responsibilities, of which Mrs. Leigh warned her. Whatever might happen, whether she succeeded or failed, her purpose, to do what she knew to be right, was not to be shaken. The event was not upon her, the duty was. If he had made it necessary she would have told the charge to the world, in suing for a divorce. She would not tell, except in a court of law. Refusing to tell, she gave him that only way of escape, of which he availed himself. If she had spoken, there is little doubt—the evidence in Moore's 'Life' is confirmed by the 'Quarterly Review,'—that he would have died by his own hand. If she had once uttered the words, he would not have drawn back, and lived. Lord Byron
pp. 234 to 235, 246. and Mrs. Leigh and the 'Quarterly Review' agree in this; that as regarded the charge which she would not disclose, Lady Byron had only her own unsupported evidence to depend upon. This was the obstacle upon which Lord Byron relied, warning her that she would strive against it in vain. When it was found that she was not to be turned from her settled purpose, he prepared to surrender, with such show of honour as was possible. He intimated, says
p. 233. October, 1869, pp. 418, 565. the 'Quarterly Review,' his fixed determination to go into court unless certain specific charges were disclaimed. Lord Broughton was wont to relate that he racked his imagination to exhaust them and

put each categorically. Do you adopt or believe this? to which the invariable answer was—We disclaim it—We do not believe it—The charge which involved Mrs. Leigh was named and disclaimed.* But what an idle show was this. The 'Review' tells us there can be no doubt that Wilmot Horton's disclaimer was virtually complete. His disclaimer p. 418
of what? All he disclaimed was, that Hobhouse had guessed the offence. The last question and answer: "Do you adopt this?" "We disclaim it" left the "*it*" just where and what it was at the beginning—some unnamed cause which forbade Lady Byron to return, tainted her husband's name, and drove him into exile. Had he been in earnest, he would have intimated his fixed determination to go into Court, unless his wife would disavow any other offence than adultery and bitter words, or such other charge as she chose to specify. If the unhappy debate which Mrs. Stowe has raised could be blotted out, there would be an end of controversy. The question between Lord Byron and Lady Byron is whether he was guilty of the great offence told to Dr. Lushington, whatever it may have been, or,

* It is fit to guard against a fallacy which may lie in the word *disclaim*. It is probable that, at this time, Wilmot Horton did not know of the particular offence, nor until long afterwards, if at all. It is possible that he did know, and had warrant from Lady Byron to disclaim it *as the cause of separation*, and to declare that she had not sanctioned it (p. 233), but, as the letter to Mrs. Villiers shows, certainly not to deny the commission of the offence.

whether, the purest of the pure, the ignorant in her innocence, forged, for the worst purpose, a foul and atrocious lie, such a lie as it could not have entered into her mind to conceive. But for the right to defend Mrs. Leigh's memory, no man, or rather one man only,* could have pretended to withstand the overwhelming force of the evidence against Lord Byron, written in his conduct. Let us read it from the 'Quarterly Review.'

October, 1869. pp. 416 to 417.

"His language, so long as there was a hope of reconciliation, was uniformly generous and conciliatory."

"'It was only when every effort failed, and his very reluctance to bring matters to an extremity was turned against him, that he occasionally broke into bitterness. His fixed and deliberate state of feeling towards his wife will be best collected from his conversations with Dr. Kennedy in Cephalonia the year before his death." Then follow extracts from the conversations:

"'If I said anything disrespectful of Lady B., I am very much to blame. Lady B. deserves every respect from me, and certainly nothing could give me greater pleasure than a reconciliation.'"

"'I do not, indeed, know the cause of separation,' said Lord B. 'I know that many falsehoods have been spread abroad—such as my bringing actresses to my house—but they were all false.

* Not alluding to the 'Quarterly Review.'

Lady B. left me without explaining the cause. I sent Hobhouse to her, who almost went on his knees, but in vain; and at length I wished to institute an action against her, that it might be seen what were her motives.'"

"'What could I have done? I did everything at the time that could be done, and I am and have always been ready for a reconciliation.'"

"The general tone" (says the 'Quarterly Review,' speaking of his letters to Mrs. Leigh) "towards Lady Byron is kind and even affectionate. It is only when the galling consequences of the separation, his exile and his slurred name, come back upon him, that he breaks out." January, 1870. p. 229.

"He wrote letters to all his most intimate friends to say that he, not she, was to blame; and that so long as she remained with him he had not a fault to find with her. He all but quarrels with Moore for taking an opposite view. He was constantly bearing testimony to her good qualities, and he retained a lurking kindness for her through life, though chequered with bursts of bitterness." p. 247.

"The glowing praise of Lady Byron in 'A Sketch' goes far towards neutralising the bitterness of the 'Lines on hearing that Lady Byron was ill' (1816). Aurora Raby may pair off with Miss Millpond, and the biting satire of his poetry is fully compensated by the candid commendation of his prose."

All this is perfectly consistent with Lord Byron's

guilt. Notwithstanding his rage when the galling consequences of the separation, his exile, and his slurred name pressed upon him, at other times he could not but admire the living truth of the poet's picture of unbending virtue,

Summum crede nefas animam præferre pudori,

the firm resolve, the steadfast will, guided by duty, and not to be turned from the straight path by fear or by persuasion. In his better mood he would not fail to acknowledge the pity and tenderness which his wife's perfect purity could give to an offender who would have been most hateful to her if she had been governed by natural impulses, and not by fixed rules and principles; nor could he be always insensible to the patience and forbearance which his cruel provocations could not stir to anger. Knowing, too, the chief cause of her misery during wedlock, he must have been touched with something more than thankfulness when assured that his sister's name would not be breathed in the demand for a divorce. But is his conduct consistent with Lady Byron's guilt? Common sense may be wearied out and lost in a wild, howling waste of words, but will never arrive at the conclusion, that even while Lady Byron was persisting in an odious lie, an unnatural invention, which had doomed her husband to exile, his fixed and deliberate feelings towards her could have been admiration, affection, and a desire for reconcilement.

But this is a digression, a wandering to collect the new evidence which the 'Quarterly Review,' has given of the truth of Lady Byron's communication to Dr. Lushington. It is time to return to the evidence which confirms the truth told to Mrs. Stowe and to Medora Leigh.

We are now taught why Mr. Moore so carefully excluded from the 'Life' Lord Byron's letters to Mrs. Leigh. Girding at the vulgarity of Wall Street, at the want of high-born repose in New York, the 'Quarterly Review' is not ashamed to pour out the spirit of those letters to the world, without one word of indignation, as though they were things common in the life and conversation of English brothers and sisters, too common to excite surprise. pp. 241 to 242.

"He wrote" to his sister, says the 'Review,' "not less than twice a month on an average; and, with passing intervals of irritation and despondency, rattled on in much the same manner as in his published letters to his friends. He mentions, in more guarded language, his principal *liaisons*, especially that which gave birth to Allegra, and the first which seriously occupied him at Venice;" (the adultery with the wife of his host) "and his account of his first meeting with the Countess Guiccioli is as glowing as if it was written for an unconcerned reader." p. 228.

Was it ever heard that a brother should write such letters?—telling of adultery after adultery, of

the prone and brute fury with which he had rushed into the "*liaison*" of which Allegra was the fruit, while his words of deeper sorrow than the wail above the dead, his vows of eternal remembrance and widowhood, his promised prayer for blessings upon his wife, were still ringing in his sister's ears? If such letters were common in the household life of London, as, from the apathy of our Censor, might be supposed, it would be high time to count the number of righteous men in the great city. Here is some of the confirmatory proof demanded by the 'Quarterly Review;' under lawful relations between brother and sister such letters are impossible.

October, 1869. p. 442. January, 1870. p. 218.

When it is asked how can the letters of January and February be justified if Lady Byron knew—and she did know—that the crime had been committed, it seems not unreasonable to ask the inquirers to give the means for an answer by showing those letters, in their hands, out of which they have culled a few entire, and fragments of others. If so much truth can be extracted from the few selected for a purpose after long search, and careful thought—set apart, because they were supposed to vindicate Lord Byron,—what might not be found in those which are withheld? His defenders know, right well, that if what is suppressed had been favourable to him, they would have served him better by producing it than by folios of invective against his wife. It is a marvellous thing that they should not have made

even the pretence of an attempt to explain how it happened that when Lady Byron first made, and while, in spite of threat and persuasion, she continued to make, a charge which tainted her husband's name and banished him, and while she refused to deny the commission of that other crime of which Mrs. Villiers wrote, yet the relations between the sisters in law continued unchanged by the separation of the husband and wife, and the devoted sister, the only living thing he loved, was, with his knowledge, and by his desire, in affectionate intimacy with the wife, an intimacy which continued to the end of his life and for six years afterwards. A clew that will guide us out of this labyrinth will, probably, lead to a way of escape from the other. The proof should have been given unasked. The friends of Mrs. Leigh may reasonably be expected to show so much as will explain the motives of her conduct, which upon their supposition of innocence is, at present, inexplicable. The 'Quarterly Review' speaks under the authority of her friends as well as of the friends of Lord Byron, and seems to have access to documents which might have been looked for in the hands of the representatives of Lady Byron. If those who possess all these advantages will endeavour to obtain the information, and will show the letters which shall now be pointed out, it is probable that strife and debate on this subject will be ended.

p. 228.

p. 233.

Give, from any unpublished parts of Lord Byron's

journals and letters, or from other authentic sources, what, more than has been published, can be learned of his daily life from the 1st of June, 1813, to the 20th of September, 1814. Especially, in 1813, from the 1st of June to the 8th of July; from the 28th of July to the 28th of August; from the 9th to the 27th of September; from the 2nd of October to the 14th of November. And in 1814, from the 16th of January to the 10th of February; from the 7th to the 14th of April; from the 14th of June to the 20th of September; with such particulars of time and place, and of his hosts and guests, as can be learned. What was the cause, frequently referred to in his Journal, from the 14th of November to the 12th of December, 1813, that impelled him to write the 'Bride of Abydos?' What was the name referred to in his Journal of the 14th of November? Was the name mentioned or referred to in the Journal of the 16th of November and 6th of December written down in the Journal, or were there blanks instead of the name? Who was the acquaintance whom he meant to delineate in the 'Corsair,' under the name of Francesca? Who was the friend that praised the pretty letter which he sent to Miss Milbanke? What was the day of Medora Leigh's birth? Did anything in the 'Memoirs' that were burned resemble the pages 19 to 21 in the 'John Bull Magazine' for July, 1824? What were the words omitted in printing Lord Byron's letter to

Mr. Moore of the 2nd of February, 1815? (Moore, vol. iii. p. 145.) Is the reason known why Mrs. Leigh's half-brother, being at Genoa in 1823, neglected to call on her half-brother Lord Byron?

The following papers probably contain valuable information:—

The unpublished portions of the letters of January and February, 1816. 'Quarterly,' October, 1869. pp. 414 to 415.

The causes of complaint communicated by Lady Byron to Mrs. Leigh, Captain Byron, Mrs. Clermont, and another female friend, in November, December, or January, 1815–1816. January, 1870. p. 222.

Letters of Lady Byron and Mrs. Leigh, in November and December, 1815. p. 222.

Letters of Lord Byron and Mrs. Leigh to Lady Byron in January and February, 1816. pp. 222 to 228.

Mrs. Leigh's warning letter to Lady Byron, and Lady Byron's reply, which is said to show that she was incapable of self-sacrifice. p. 228.

Written evidence of the course taken by the Arbitrators in 1816, with the essential communications that passed between them. p. 233.

Mrs. Leigh's letter to Lady Byron, as to the calumnious report, and the letter of Mrs. Villiers, which Lady Byron answered on the 20th of February, 1816, and any reply of Mrs. Villiers to that letter. pp. 231 to 232.

Mrs. Leigh's letter, in which she sought to dissuade Lady Byron from taking legal measures. p. 234.

p. 229. Mrs. Leigh's letter to Lady Byron on the 'Stanzas to Augusta.'

p. 230. The consultations of Lady Byron with Dr. Lushington and several other friends, about March, 1820, when Lord Byron offered for her perusal part of a memoir of his life.

p. 234. The series of Mrs. Leigh's letters certified by the proctor.

p. 230. The correspondence between Lady Byron and Mrs. Leigh as to the destruction of the 'Memoirs,' beginning with a letter of Lady Byron in May, 1824.

p. 230. Lady Byron's correspondence with her advisers as to her 'Remarks' on Moore's 'Life of Byron.'

pp. 233, 234, 235. The letters written in consequence of the quarrel between Lady Byron and Mrs. Leigh, whether about money or any other matters, especially the letter in which Lady Byron speaks of the invalidity of a wife's testimony.

p. 219. The paper that Lady Byron lent to Mrs. Stowe.

p. 228. Lord Byron's letters to Mrs. Leigh, including those in which he tells of his adulteries with the mother of Allegra, and the wife of his host at Venice, and of his first meeting with the Countess Guiccioli.

p. 229. Lord Byron's furious letters at the end of 1816 and January, 1817, threatening to come over and take legal proceedings, and the retort of his wife's relations that they would institute a suit against him.

Mrs. Leigh's extant letter to a distinguished relative, written (as it would seem) in 1843. p. 236.

To condemn, to withhold the evidence which might justify the condemned, and, at the same time, to defy conjecture, is something more than unreasonable. But, although to guess against a playfellow who holds the truth in a closed hand, is not an equal game, a conjecture shall be hazarded, in full assurance of Lady Byron's purity and truth, and in the belief that, early in her marriage, she learned the guilty secret, and, notwithstanding, wrote the letters of January and February, and continued in affection with Mrs. Leigh down to the year 1830. The conjecture, prefaced by a few certainties, assumes that the guilt has been proved by Lady Byron's word, confirmed by other evidence, and, on that assumption, explains her continued affection for Mrs. Leigh.

The guilt of October, or November, 1813, which involved a name that Lord Byron dared not breathe, had been repented, abjured, and repeated as early as May, 1814. He had left London on the 17th of January, on a visit to Colonel Leigh, and went on to Newstead Abbey, whither Mrs. Leigh accompanied or followed him. During his absence from London the 'Corsair' was written, partly at Colonel Leigh's house. The day before he began this journey he wrote in his journal:—"To-morrow I leave town for a few days." "A wife would be my salvation."

Moore's 'Byron,' vol. ii. pp. 244 to 246, 228, 253 to 255; vol. iii. pp. 78 to 79. 'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 421. 'Moore,' vol. ii. pp. 308, 310; vol. iii. pp. 33, 37.

p. 112. In the following September he resolved that if Miss Milbanke did not accept him he would immediately leave England. Mrs. Leigh, who was in London about the time of Lady Byron's arrival as a bride in Piccadilly, expressed to Lady Shelley, whom she accompanied when the wedding visit was paid, the greatest anxiety that her brother's marriage should reform him. These are facts; the conjecture is—

That after the marriage, Lady Byron having learned the guilty secret, learned at the same time, and believed in, the sincere and earnest repentance of one of the offenders, who was again tempted, and stood fast, and strove to turn the tempter from evil. It appears as though, immediately before the separation, the wife and the sister were working together for some end, thwarting his will. Lady Byron wrote to Mrs. Leigh—"It seemed impossible to tell if his feelings towards you or me were the most completely reversed; for, as I have told you, he loves or hates us together." On the next day she wrote:—"He was kind to me again, but still rather odd." "I must tell you that you are 'Augusta' again to B., for during the paroxysm you were 'Mrs. Leigh,' and I expected you would soon be 'The Honourable.'" And, perhaps, it may be inferred from his words,—"My wife and sister, when they joined parties, sent me prayer-books"—that there had been something to estrange the sisters-in-

'Quarterly,' January, 1870, pp. 223 to 224.

Medwin, p. 116.

law, and that they had united for an end, which is suggested by the means which he mentions with too much levity. In the 'Stanzas to Augusta' is a verse, which, as it was first written, spoke of his sister's endeavour to reclaim him at the time of his separation :—

"Though watchful 'twas but to reclaim me." Moore, vol. x. p. 198.

The affection in the poems addressed to Augusta, and in "The Castled Crag of Drachenfels," is of a different kind from that of the verses of the 4th of May. When he had broken quite away, he could not but be thankful that the chain had not been united again. That if there had been guilt there had also been repentance, may be inferred from the gift of the bible, recorded by the 'Quarterly,' and from some verses in the 'Siege of Corinth,' which will be mentioned again in the review of his poems. The 'Quarterly Review' tells us, that after Lady Byron left her husband's house, she was minutely informed of all that happened there by Mrs. Leigh, who used her utmost influence to appease the quarrel, and that this explains why Lady Byron wrote in such passionate terms of gratitude and confidence, and named her child Augusta Ada. She trusted in the influence for good of the repentant, and her confidence was not betrayed. There is a mysterious passage in Lady Anne Barnard's 'Memoirs,' from which it may, perhaps, be inferred that

pp. 193 to 206. vol. viii. p. 156.

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 436.

January, 1870. p. 222.

her confidence was not careless:—"I could find by some implications, not followed up by me lest she might have condemned herself afterwards for her involuntary disclosures, that he soon attempted to corrupt her principles, both with respect to her own conduct and her latitude for his. She saw the precipice on which she stood, and kept his sister with her as much as possible." In fiction, unless the story were conducted with marvellous skill, the forgiveness and the trust might be condemned as passing belief; but the certain facts seem not to leave open a way to any other conjecture, and, beside the general warrant for forgiveness, an instance of the same kind may be remembered, in which authority next to the highest spoke of forgiveness, and comfort, and love, lest the offender should be swallowed up with over much sorrow.

p. 234. In the year 1816 Mrs. Leigh had striven hard to dissuade Lady Byron from taking legal measures for a divorce. In 1830 they quarrelled (we believe, p. 233. says the 'Quarterly') about money matters. In the p. 235. course of the quarrel, which was embittered by the refusal of Mrs. Leigh to absolve Sir Ralph and Lady Noel from the reproach of having been the authors of the separation, Lady Byron alleged that the warning given to her by Mrs. Leigh, in the year 1816, of the hindrances to divorce, was "a curious proof of the plot," meaning, adds the 'Review,' "a plot between Lord Byron and his

sister to get rid of his wife." Those who saw in the letters a circumstance which embittered the quarrel, might perhaps have found something of the original cause. The words, "we believe about money matters," imply that the belief was gathered by the wayside, not among the letters. It is hard to understand how Lady Byron could have conceived that Mrs. Leigh's efforts to prevent a separation were part of a plot to enable Lord Byron to get rid of his wife. To hinder them from being uncoupled was surely not the way to set him free. Mrs. Leigh's efforts were directed, not to enable Lord Byron to get rid of his wife, but to prevent his wife from getting rid of him. She had not been successful in 1816 in her endeavour to keep the wife within her husband's power; but, perhaps, Lady Byron had discovered that she had borne a part in the scheme to place her there. If Mrs. Leigh was at Newstead in September, 1814, when Lord Byron could not, as he had wished, receive Moore as a guest—if she was the friend whom he consulted before he made the second offer of marriage to Miss Milbanke, the cause of the quarrel in 1830 is perhaps apparent. In the beginning of that year the first volume of the quarto edition of Moore's 'Life of Byron' was published. There Lady Byron read that she had been bought and sold, because a wife was thought necessary to her counterfeit lover's salvation; how the friend, by

Moore, vol. iii. pp. 104 to 105, 107, 112.

whose counsel she had been at first rejected as a learned woman without ready money, looked upon her, to the last, as prey of so mean a kind that no better excuse could be found for entrapping her than unwillingness that the pretty snare, the prettiest of letters, should have been made in vain. Her fixed rules and principles would have condemned the sacrifice, though she had not been the victim; and it was not in woman not to resent deeply the disparagement published to the world. The plot begun in 1814, and continued in 1816, was now laid open. In the former year, Lord Byron, with his friend and counsellor, had drawn Miss Milbanke into his power by working upon her love; in the latter year, Mrs. Leigh being his instrument, he had endeavoured to keep her there by working on her fear. When it is said that Lady Byron never forgave, it is forgotten that, in this quarrel, she was willing to forgive, while Mrs. Leigh declined all further intimacy with her; that "poor dear Augusta's" obduracy was proof against all the efforts of Mrs. Villiers to bring her to reason, and that she needed the excuse of the trials to which her temper had been exposed by the pecuniary embarrassments of her husband, and untoward events in her family. If Mrs. Stowe's memory could be trusted, they were reconciled before the death of Mrs. Leigh, who, in her last sickness, received consolation and comfort from Lady Byron. The

'Quarterly,' January, 1870, pp. 233, 235.

Mrs. Stowe, p. 298.

'Quarterly Review,' not contradicting in plain words, implies the contrary. It is certain that the unforgiving spirit was not harboured by Lady Byron. ('Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 441. January, 1870, p. 249.)

According to the 'Review,' Mrs. Jameson was a fellow-guardian of Medora Leigh, and after hearing the story of her birth, told it, dating from 1843, among a select circle of friends.* All claim (says the 'Review') to the credit of forbearance or generosity ended when Lady Byron began to circulate the story. Perhaps something more is meant than that Lady Byron can claim credit for only so much (pp. 237, 239 to 242, 247 to 249.)

* The unguarded language of the 'Review,' in mentioning Lady Byron's disclosure of the story, may be contrasted with Lord Byron's description of his wife as "the most decorous woman that ever existed," "a perfect and refined gentlewoman." "Mrs. Beecher Stowe" (says the Reviewer) "has gained courage to call a spade a spade, and we get the inculpating words and compromising deed, hot and strong as heart could wish." "It was a racy bit of scandal, with which all Lady Byron's gossips were regaled in turn." "The luscious tit-bit—the trail of the woodcock—is new to us." These words will hardly find favour with "the highly refined gentlewomen of rank" with whom the American lady is contrasted. There is something of the same fault in describing Miss Milbanke's love as the having a fancy for the man, and in a complaint "of the pruriency of Mrs. Stowe's imagination," because she had found in the 'Review' an insinuation of unseemly conduct against Lady Byron, since disclaimed with a "we need hardly say," but most fairly inferred, and not unsupported by the sneers:—"When Miss Milbanke is set up as a model of saint-like purity," "the sanctuary of pure imaginings in which Aurora Raby, alias Annabella Milbanke, dwelt," "The Ithuriel spear of her purity"—words which do not sound in perfect harmony with the confession, "We believe her to have been the purest of the pure."—*Quarterly Review*, January, 1870, pp. 239 to 242, 245-6; October, 1869, pp. 413, 431-2, 441.

forbearance and generosity as she gave. What did
1816, April. she give? In the very year of the separation, Lord Byron appealed to the world as the heart-broken husband of an unrelenting wife. Her requital, Shelley has given us one instance, was to silence
July. the accusations against him. Within three months, in the third canto of 'Childe Harold,' he intimated
Medwin, p. 144. that his daughter would be taught to hate him; and,
1818, January. eighteen months later, in the fourth canto, acknowledging that his punishment would have been just from hands less near, he cursed his wife and her
1819, July. confederates. Another eighteen months passed, and in 'Don Juan' he held her up to scorn and ridicule, accused her of being revengeful, implacable, an adulteress, and, proclaiming his own adulteries, laid the iniquity on her, because she had provoked them in that she was a shallow pedant, a conceited prater, insipid. She did not seek to justify herself to the world before whom he had spat upon her; and although she did wish to be known by those whose opinion was valuable and whose kindness was dear to her, and could not willingly leave her conduct, character, and memory to the contempt of after time, she did not, to her nearest friends, disclose
1830. the two great offences. After eleven more years of perfect silence, she underwent, in Moore's book, outrage which would have enforced any man, perhaps any other woman, to vengeance. Six years passed since the death of her husband. Mrs. Leigh

quarrelled with her, and would not be reconciled. Still she forebore, because she could not defend herself without striking. She was content to vindicate the memory of her father and mother. Ten more 1840.
years passed. If half the zeal which has served to condemn her without a cause had been employed to discover the truth, we might know the motives which urged her to speak out then to the half-informed Medora Leigh, and to Lord and Lady Lovelace. Yet sixteen years more, and Lady Lovelace 1856.
and Mrs. Leigh were gone. Now, at least, she might have been justified if she had vindicated herself to the world. She is denied even the privilege of seeking sympathy from the friends who surrounded her in old age. They knew that the motives which had so long constrained her to bear reproach in silence had ceased; and she is refused the right of comfort from reading in their faces the assurance that she did not deserve the indignities which had been cast upon her. When the evidence which is withheld shall be brought to light, will be the fit time to speculate upon her motives. Meanwhile, we can look upon her likeness, drawn as well by foes as friends, and say if characters of evil or folly are to be found there. A corrupt tree never bore the fruit by which she is known.

"She is a very superior woman, and very little 1813, 27 Nov.
spoiled, which is strange in an heiress—a girl of Moore.

vol. ii. p. 285. twenty—a peeress that is to be in her own right, an only child, and a *savante*, who has always had her own way. She is a poetess, a mathematician, a metaphysician, and yet withal very kind, generous, and gentle, with very little pretension. Any other head would be turned with half her acquisitions and a tenth of her advantages." LORD BYRON

1814, 7 October. vol. iii. p. 120. "My wife elect is perfection, and I hear of nothing but her merits and her wonders, and that she is 'very pretty.'" LORD BYRON

14 October. p. 121. "I certainly did not dream that she was attached to me, which it seems she has been for some time. I also thought her of a very cold disposition, in which I was also mistaken." LORD BYRON

"As to her virtues, &c., &c., you will hear enough of them (for she is a kind of *pattern* in the north) without my running into a display on the subject."

1815, 8 March. p. 154. "Bell is in health; and unvaried good humour and behaviour." LORD BYRON

1816, 2 January. p. 222. "My copyist would write out anything I desired in all the ignorance of innocence." LORD BYRON.

8 March. p. 204. "I must set you right in one point however. The fault was *not*—no, nor even the misfortune—in my choice (unless in *choosing at all*)—for I do not believe—and I must say it in the very dregs of all this bitter business—that there ever was a better, or even a brighter, a kinder, or a more amiable being than Lady B. I never had, nor can have any reproach to make her while with me. Where there LORD BYRON.

is blame, it belongs to myself, and if I cannot redeem, I must bear it."

LORD BYRON.

"Foil'd was perversion by that youthful mind, 29 March, vol. x. p. 190.
Which Flattery fool'd not—Baseness could not blind,
Deceit infect not—near Contagion soil—
Indulgence weaken—nor Example spoil—
Nor master'd science tempt her to look down
On humbler talents with a pitying frown—
Nor Genius swell—nor Beauty render vain—
Nor Envy ruffle to retaliate pain—
Nor Fortune change—Pride raise—nor Passion bow,
Nor Virtue teach austerity—till now,
Serenely purest of her sex that live,
But wanting one sweet weakness—to forgive,
Too shock'd at faults her soul can never know,
She deems that all could be like her below:
Foe to all vice, yet hardly Virtue's friend,
For Virtue pardons those she would amend."

LORD BYRON.

"She was governed by what she called fixed rules and principles." 1818, September. vol. xv. p. 117.

LORD BYRON.

"Of his wife he spoke with much respect and affection. He said she was an illustrious lady, distinguished for the qualities of her heart and understanding, and that all the fault of their cruel separation lay with himself." 1819. vol. iv. p. 219.

LORD BYRON.

"I burnt your last note for two reasons:—firstly, it was written in a style not very agreeable; and secondly, I wished to take your word without documents, which are the worldly resources of suspicious people." 1821, 17 Nov. vol. vi. p. 30.

"If we are not reconciled, it is not my fault." 1822. Medwin, p. 161.

"Lady Byron will not make it up with me now,

lest the world should say that her mother only was to blame." LORD BYRON.

1823, April. Lady Blessington's 'Conversations,' pp. 315 to 316.

"I hope my daughter will be well educated; but of this I have little dread, as her mother is highly cultivated, and certainly has a degree of self-control that I never saw equalled. I am certain that Lady Byron's first idea is what is due to herself; I mean that it is the undeviating rule of her conduct." LORD BYRON.

"But though I accuse Lady Byron of an excess of self-respect, I must in candour admit, that if any person ever had an excuse for an extraordinary portion of it, she has; as in all her thoughts, words, and deeds, she is the most decorous woman that ever existed, and must appear—what few, I fancy could—a perfect and refined gentlewoman even to her *femme de chambre.* This extraordinary degree of self-command in Lady Byron produced an opposite effect on me. When I have broken out, on slight provocations, into one of my ungovernable fits of rage, her calmness piqued and seemed to reproach me; it gave her an air of superiority that vexed and increased my *mauvaise humeur.* I am now older and wiser, and should know how to appreciate her conduct as it deserved."

1823. Dr. Kennedy's 'Conversations,' copied from the 'Quarterly Review,' 1869, October, p. 417.

"If I have said anything disrespectful of Lady B. I am very much to blame. Lady B. deserves every respect from me, and certainly nothing could give me greater pleasure than a reconciliation." LORD BYRON.

"You know by this time that we have had a visit

WALTER SCOTT.

from Lady Byron, delightful both on its own account and because it was accompanied with good news and a letter from you. I regret we could not keep her longer than a day with us, which was spent on the banks of the Yarrow, and I hope and believe she was pleased with us, because I am sure she will be so with everything that is intended to please her: meantime her visit gave me a most lawyer-like fit of the bile. I have lived too long to be surprised at any instance of human caprice, but still it vexes me. Now, one would suppose Lady Byron, young, beautiful, with birth, and rank, and fortune, and taste, and high accomplishments, and admirable good sense, qualified to have made happy one whose talents are so high as Lord Byron's, and whose marked propensity it is to like those who are qualified to admire and understand his talents; and yet it has proved otherwise. I can safely say, my heart ached for her all the time we were together; there was so much patience and decent resignation to a situation which must have pressed on her thoughts, that she was to me one of the most interesting creatures I had seen for a score of years. I am sure I should not have felt such strong kindness towards her had she been at the height of her fortune, and in the full enjoyment of all the brilliant prospects to which she seemed destined."

1817, Sept. 26. Letter to Joanna Baillie. Lockhart's 'Life of Scott,' vol. v. pp. 254 to 255.

'QUARTERLY REVIEW.'

"She had many good qualities and did some good in her generation."

1869, October, p. 441.

1870, January, p. 244. "Her benevolence and philanthropy were duly appreciated." 'Quarterly Review.'

p. 246. "We believe her to have been the purest of the pure." 'Quarterly Review.'

Extracts from 'Observations by Thomas Campbell on Lady Byron's Remarks.' *

1830. "Lady Byron could not have outlived her sufferings if she had not wound up her fortitude to the high point of trusting mainly for consolation, not to the opinion of the world, but to her own inward peace; and, having said what ought to convince the world, I verily believe that she has less care about the fashionable opinion respecting her than any of her friends can have. But we, her friends, mix with the world; and we hear offensive absurdities about her, which we have a right to put down." Thomas Campbell.

"She brought to Lord Byron beauty, manners, fortune, meekness, romantic affection, and everything that ought to have made her to the most transcendent man of genius—*had he been what he should have been*—his pride and his idol. I speak not of Lady Byron in the commonplace manner of attesting character: I appeal to the gifted Mrs. Siddons and Joanna Baillie, to Lady Charlemont, and to other ornaments of their sex, whether I am

* Campbell's 'Observations' have been read in the 'New Monthly Magazine' for April, 1830. These extracts are copied from Mrs. Stowe's book, pp. 85, 88-89.

exaggerating in the least when I say that, in their whole lives, they have seen few beings so intellectual and well-tempered as Lady Byron.

"I wish to be as ingenuous as possible in speaking of her. Her manner, I have no hesitation to say, is cool at the first interview, but is modestly, and not insolently, cool: she contracted it, I believe, from being exposed by her beauty and large fortune, in youth, to numbers of suitors whom she could not have otherwise kept at a distance. But this manner could have had no influence with Lord Byron; for it vanishes on nearer acquaintance, and has no origin in coldness. All her friends like her frankness the better for being preceded by this reserve. This manner, however, though not the slightest apology for Lord Byron, has been inimical to Lady Byron in her misfortunes. It endears her to her friends; but it piques the indifferent. Most odiously unjust, therefore, is Mr. Moore's assertion, that she has had the advantage of Lord Byron in public opinion. She is, comparatively speaking, unknown to the world; for though she has many friends—that is, a friend in every one who knows her—yet her pride and purity and misfortunes naturally contract the circle of her acquaintances."

Extracts from Miss Martineau's Biographical Sketch of Lady Byron, printed in 'The Atlantic Monthly.' *

1816 to 1860. HARRIET MARTINEAU.

"When grief upon grief followed, in the appearance of mortal disease in her only child, her quiet patience stood her in good stead as before. She even found strength to appropriate the blessings of the occasion, and took comfort, as did her dying daughter, in the intimate friendship which grew closer as the time of parting drew nigh.

"Lady Lovelace died in 1852; and, for her few remaining years, Lady Byron was devoted to her grandchildren. But nearer calls never lessened her interest in remoter objects. Her mind was of the large and clear quality which could comprehend remote interests in their true proportions, and achieve each aim as perfectly as if it were the only one. Her agents used to say that it was impossible to mistake her directions; and thus her business was usually well done. There was no room, in her case, for the ordinary doubts, censures, and sneers about the misapplication of bounty."

"Her funds were not lavished in encouraging hypocrisy and improvidence among the idle and worthless; and the quality of her charity was, in

* These passages are not in Miss Martineau's 'Biographical Sketches' (pp. 316 to 325). They are copied from Mrs. Stowe's book (pp. 96 to 98, 100, 101). Mrs. Stowe cites them from the 'Atlantic Monthly.'

fact, as admirable as its quantity. Her chief aim was the extension and improvement of popular education; but there was no kind of misery that she heard of that she did not palliate to the utmost, and no kind of solace that her quick imagination and sympathy could devise that she did not administer."

"Five and thirty years of unremitting secret bounty like this must make up a great amount of human happiness; but this was only one of a wide variety of methods of doing good. It was the unconcealable magnitude of her beneficence, and its wise quality, which made her a second time the theme of English conversation in all honest households within the four seas. Years ago, it was said far and wide that Lady Byron was doing more good than anybody else in England; and it was difficult to imagine how anybody could do more."

"There would be no end if I were to catalogue the schemes of which these are a specimen. It is of more consequence to observe that her mind was never narrowed by her own acts, as the minds of benevolent people are so apt to be. To the last, her interest in great political movements, at home and abroad, was as vivid as ever. She watched every step won in philosophy, every discovery in science, every token of social change and progress in every shape. Her mind was as liberal as her heart and hand. No diversity of opinion troubled her: she was respectful to every sort of individuality, and indulgent to all constitutional peculiarities."

"But I must stop; for I do not wish my honest memorial to degenerate into panegyric."

"All these deeds were done under a heavy burden of ill health. Before she had passed middle life, her lungs were believed to be irreparably injured by partial ossification. She was subject to attacks so serious, that each one, for many years, was expected to be the last."

"Her manners differed with circumstances. Her shrinking sensitiveness might embarrass one visitor, while another would be charmed with her easy, significant, and vivacious conversation. It depended much on whom she talked with. The abiding certainty was, that she had strength for the hardest of human trials, and the composure which belongs to strength. For the rest, it is enough to point to her deeds, and to the mourning of her friends round the chasm which her departure has made in their life, and in the society in which it is spent. All that could be done in the way of personal love and honour was done while she lived: it only remains now to see that her name and fame are permitted to shine forth at last in their proper light."

Will not one good lance be found to enter the lists in the cause of such a woman? Will not the *Saturday Review* re-judge its justice, and pronounce that she *was* a paragon?

> Firm, and the fair seal of the great Maker,
> A print next that of angels * * *
> 'Tis malice dares traduce you or blind ignorance
> That throws her stains, which fall off from your figure.

REVIEW OF POEMS OF LORD BYRON.

From 1813 *to* 1817.

"In rhyme I can keep more away from facts; but the thought always runs through—through * * * yes, yes, through."

LORD BYRON, 17th November, 1813.

"It is difficult for him to kindle on any subject with which his own character and interests are not identified; but by the introduction of fictitious incidents, by change of scene or time, he has enveloped his poetical disclosures in a system impenetrable except to a very few."

LADY BYRON, 1818.

A REVIEW of Lord Byron's poems, beginning with the 'Bride of Abydos,' in 1813, and ending with 'Manfred,' in 1817, may help to confirm the truth of Lady Byron's disclosures to Mrs. Stowe and Medora Leigh, and to explain her letters of January and February, 1816. 'Quarterly Review,' October, 1869. January, 1870.

1813, November.—The 'Bride of Abydos' * was written as a tale of the unhallowed love of Selim, captain of a band of pirates in the Archipelago, and Zuleika, and was altered to suit the poet's time and country. In verses which, through an oversight, were not struck out when he changed the story, Lord Byron recounting the misery from which

* See p. 186 to p. 205.

Zuleika had been saved by an early death, tells the agony of his own remorse in the words of his journal and letters:

Moore's 'Life and Works,' vol. ix. p. 252, sec. 27.

> Thrice happy! ne'er to feel nor fear the force
> Of absence, shame, pride, hate, revenge, remorse!
> And oh! that pang where more than madness lies!
> The worm that will not sleep—and never dies;
> Thought of the gloomy day and ghastly night,
> That dreads the darkness, and yet loathes the light,
> That winds around and tears the quivering heart!
> Ah! wherefore not consume it—and depart!

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 421.

1814, January.—The 'Corsair,'* part of which was written in Colonel Leigh's house, near Newmarket, as Mrs Leigh told Lady Shelley† at the time. Conrad is a fullgrown Selim. He too is captain of a company of pirates in the Archipelago, and reigns with Medora in one of the bright islands there. This poem is connected with the history of Francesca di Rimini, by the name, Francesca, changed to Medora, and by the three mottoes from Dante. In mentioning a report that he was the actual Conrad, Lord Byron seems to point to two distinct sources from which the tale, "written *con amore* and much from *existence*," had been taken. One was plainly in the East. Perhaps the other

* See p. 192 to p. 195.

† The astonishment of Lady Shelley and Earl Stanhope at Mrs. Stowe's accusation, so far as their wonder came from recollections of personal appearance and age, is answered in Lord Byron's conversations with Lady Blessington and Captain Medwin (Lady Blessington, pp. 155, 158, 253; Medwin, pp. 93, 94).

may be traced, with the help of his journal and letters in November, 1813. Conrad is high-born and self-exiled. Sir Walter Scott tells us that those who had looked on Lord Byron would recognise some likeness in Conrad, and Jeffrey's remark that Medora has more soul, and delicacy, and reflection than belong to the women of the East, is justified and superseded by the fact that in *her* the poet was delineating one of his acquaintance. It appears from the journal that in November and December, 1813, beside the herd of married and unmarried, the "perplexities" whom he changed from time to time, and beside his sister, there was one peculiar object of his regard, one who would have cared if he had gone to Holland and had not returned, and would have been annoyed if he had not been too lazy to shoot himself. There was a Gulnare as well as a Medora. We are told in the poem that until the Corsair had seen Gulnare he had never asked if others were as fair as Medora, and that Medora would have forgiven his tenderness to Gulnare in her desolation. In the course of his everyday life Lord Byron had learned how to free himself from such perplexities when they were substantial. In poetry there was but one way of escape, and so Medora died. Nothing is told of her history or Conrad's before they came to the pirates' isle. He too suffers the sleepless agony of which the journal tells:—

Moore, vol. ix. p. 270. p. 278.

p. 257.

vol. ii. pp. 273, 298; vol. iii. p. 53.

vol. ix. pp. 304, 329; canto ii. sec. 14; canto iii. sec. 17.

p. 273, canto i. sec. 10.

The hurried tread, the upward eye,
The clenched hand, the pause of agony.
* * * * *
With feelings loosed to strengthen—not depart.
That rise, convulse—contend—that freeze or glow,
* * * * *
Behold his soul—the rest that soothes his lot.

The crimes for which this agony of remorse was suffered were not such as might be looked for in the life of a pirate, but things which, in the doing, seemed light or lovely, concealed evil which did not canker the less because it was hidden :

p. 299, canto ii. sec. x.

Deeds, thoughts, and words perhaps remember'd not
So keenly till that hour, but ne'er forgot;
Things light or lovely in their acted time,
But now to stern reflection each a crime;
The withering sense of evil unreveal'd,
Not cankering less because the more conceal'd—

And the gentle Medora, judging from her song, is a partaker of the same guilt; cherishing one fatal secret in the darkness of despair, having no hope but in death; for, while she lived, virtue denied her even the tenderness of pity.

p. 276. canto i. sec. xiv.

1.

Deep in my soul that tender secret dwells,
Lonely and lost to sight for evermore,
Save when to thine my heart responsive swells,
Then trembles into silence as before.

2.

There, in its centre, a sepulchral lamp
Burns the slow flame, eternal—but unseen;
Which not the darkness of despair can damp,
Though vain its ray as it had never been.

3.

Remember me—Oh! pass not thou my grave
Without one thought whose relics there recline:
The only pang my bosom dare not brave
Must be to find forgetfulness in thine.

4.

My fondest—faintest—latest accents hear—
Grief for the dead not Virtue can reprove;
Then give me all I ever ask'd—a tear,
The first—last—sole reward of so much love!

1814, May.—'Lara' was written. It is a continuation of the 'Corsair,' and has in it something of Lord Byron's early life, and of his return to take his place in the society of his country; with a dream, perhaps suggested by those of which he has told one in his journal. Medora may have been remembered, but she is not mentioned in 'Lara.'

vol. x. pp. 22, 25, Walter Scott. pp. 29 to 32. canto i. sec. 12 to 16.

The 'Song' of the 4th of May.*—The guilt plucked out of the 'Bride of Abydos,' and shrouded in the 'Corsair,' is here almost unveiled. Looking at Lord Byron's life from January to April, it is impossible to believe that such bitterness of grief as this song expresses should have been pretended for the daily sin which ended in satiety, not in sorrow. He is now ready to renounce the world, and to retort scorn for scorn if his secret should be discovered. A thought upon which the poet dwells in these verses, and which breaks forth in 'Parisina' and 'Manfred,' is thus repeated in the 'Stanzas to Augusta':—

1814.

* See ante, the 'Bride of Abydos,' p. 198.

Moore, vol. x. p. 198.

They may crush, but they shall not contemn—
They may torture, but shall not subdue me—
'Tis of *thee* that I think—not of them.

p. 201. 'Quarterly,' January, 1870, p. 229.

Mrs. Leigh prevented Lord Byron from printing the 'Epistle to Augusta,' and wrote to Lady Byron that she wished the 'Stanzas' at the bottom of the sea. Such a letter would not have been written if the brother had been driven into banishment, with a tainted name, without just cause.

1814. September.—He was accepted by Miss Milbanke.

1815. January 2nd.—He was married.

1815. July.—The 'Siege of Corinth,' the poem copied by Lady Byron for the printer, and the first written after the marriage. Whatever may have been that guilt of November, 1813, and May, 1814, which had been repented, and abjured, and renewed, it can be well supposed that it ceased with the marriage engagement. Lord Byron's journal and letters will hardly be read without leaving the impression that one motive for his marriage was to break the chain once and for ever; and there is no reason to believe that it was united again. The stern will and fierce passions of Conrad are given to Alp, and the tenderness of Medora to Francesca; for that name erased from the 'Corsair' is restored in the 'Siege of Corinth.' There is no taint of impious love in this poem. Perhaps the earnest, the pathetic, the long, the last appeal of Francesca to Alp, upon their final separation in this life, her

entreaty that he would not cast away the hope of heaven, and his desperate answer that it was too late to change, were drawn from what Lord Byron calls "*existence.*" Some of the verses may have a meaning beneath the surface:—

Upon his hand she laid her own,
Light was the touch but it thrill'd to the bone.
* * * *
—— never did clasp of one so dear
Strike on the pulse with such feeling of fear.
* * * *
If not for love of me be given
Thus much, then, for the love of Heaven,—
* * * *
Or thou art lost; and never shalt see,
Not earth—that's past—but Heaven or me—
* * * *
But pause one moment more, and take
The curse of Him thou didst forsake;
And look once more to Heaven, and see
Its love for ever shut from thee.
* * * *
—— his heart was swollen and turn'd aside
By deep interminable pride.
* * * *
He sue for mercy!
* * * *
No—though that cloud were thunder's worst,
And charged to crush him—let it burst!

vol. x. pp. 129 to 133. sec. 21.

The gift of the bible, mentioned in the 'Quarterly Review' for October—and it was the last gift that he received from his sister's hands—is consistent with all that Lady Byron is reported to have said and written; and may serve to explain how any-

'Quarterly,' October, 1869, p. 436. Moore, vol. v. p. 265. 17 June, 1817.

vol. iv. pp. 25, 38.

thing in the character of Balfour of Burley could have helped to lead Mrs. Leigh into the erroneous pursuasion that Lord Byron was the author of 'Tales of my Landlord.'* It is not improbable that when the parting gift was made, words had passed which were called to mind by Burley's cry:—"Come in all thy terrors—come with mine own evil deeds, which make thee most terrible of all—there is enough between the boards of this book to rescue me." It may be stranger than fiction, but is not incredible, that these two women, of whom one had forgiven, and the other had been forgiven, much, should strive in concert to soften the proud heart which could breathe such thoughts as these:—

* * the spirit burning but unbent,
May writhe—rebel—the weak alone repent!
* * * * *
I have no thought to mock his throne with prayer,
Wrung from the coward crouching of despair.

'The Corsair.'

Medwin, p. 116.

That notwithstanding something which had kept them apart, they united and worked together to turn him from evil, may be gathered from his words: "My wife and sister, when they joined parties, sent me prayer-books." One thing is certain, Lady Byron had undoubting faith that a weaker will had found strength to overcome a stronger, and that the

* Her opinion was partly founded on passages in the 'Black Dwarf.' Doubtless she was thinking of Byron's sensitiveness on the subject of his deformed foot.

presence of the person to whom the letters of January and February were written would be for good and not for evil. Upon what ground that faith rested cannot be known without the evidence which is withheld.

In 'Parisina,' the other poem written in the year of married life, in the autumn, Lord Byron returns to the old theme. He had grown bolder. In 1813 he took away the offence out of regard to the opinion of his age and country. In January, 1814, he withdrew the name 'Francesca,' and veiled his mystery in words of doubtful meaning and mottoes. In the 'Song' of May, 1814, he made ready to retort scorn for scorn if his guilt should be discovered; but now the private apology to Galt was turned into a vindication to the world, with a rebuke to the fastidiousness of his readers; and, without warrant from history, his hero was presented with erect head, standing before the judgment seat to avow and extenuate his crime. "I am aware," says Lord Byron, in the advertisement to 'Parisina,' "that in modern times the delicacy or fastidiousness of the reader may deem such subjects unfit for the purposes of poetry. The Greek dramatists, and some of the best of our old English writers, were of a different opinion; as Alfieri and Schiller have also been, more recently, upon the continent." The 'Quarterly Review' makes merry with the notion that it is lucky he had no step-mother, or he would certainly

1815.

vol. x. p. 157.

'Quarterly,' October, p. 424.

have been identified with Hugo. Is it nothing that one odious crime should have taken such fast hold of his imagination, and that he should have striven —and, spite of subtle excuses, he did strive—to take the horror from the guilt and lay it on the punishment?

Moore, vol. x. p. 160. sec. 3.

And what unto them is the world beside,
With all its change of time and tide?
* * * *
Of guilt, of peril, do they deem
In that tumultuous tender dream?
Who that hath felt that passion's power,
Or paus'd, or feared, in such an hour?

There are verses in 'Parisina' which connect that poem with the 'Song' of the 4th of May.

THE 'SONG.'

vol. iii. p. 79.

Oh! thine be the gladness and mine be the guilt,
* * * * *
— the heart which is thine shall expire undebased,
And *man* shall not break it—whatever thou mayst.
And stern to the haughty, but humble to thee
This soul in its bitterest blackness shall be.

'PARISINA.'

vol. x. p. 161. sec. iv. p. 166, sec. xi.

With many a lingering look they leave
The spot of guilty gladness past.
* * * *
And he for her had also wept,
But for the eyes that on him gazed:
His sorrow, if he felt it, slept:
Stern and erect his brow was raised.
Whate'er the grief his soul avow'd,
He would not shrink before the crowd;
But yet he dared not look on her:
Remembrance of the hours that were—

His guilt—his love—his present state—
His father's wrath—all good men's hate—
His earthly, his eternal fate—
And hers,—oh hers!—he dared not throw
One look upon that death-like brow!
Else had his rising heart betray'd
Remorse for all the wreck it made.

Pride overcame remorse, and before his father, and the nobles of the court, Hugo weighed, in a doubtful balance, his own crime against the wrongs which had been done to his mother and to himself.

Nor are my mother's wrongs forgot, p. 168, sec. xiii.
Her slighted love and ruin'd name,
The offspring's heritage of shame;
* * * *
As err'd the sire, so err'd the son, p. 170.
And thou must punish both in one.
My crime seems worst to human view,
But God must judge between us too!

In the preface to 'Parisina,' the editor of Lord Byron's works says that most of the critical journals of the time "were content to record, generally, their regret that so great a poet should have permitted himself, by awakening sympathy for a pair of incestuous lovers, to become, in some sort, the apologist of their sin." He answers the critics by citing the opinion of a nameless writer in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' who had suggested that we should not "rashly class Byron with those poetical offenders who have bent their powers 'to divest incest of its hereditary horrors.'" The Editor concludes: "We vol. x. p. 151. p. 152.

shall have occasion to recur to this subject when we reach our author's 'Manfred.'" He reached 'Manfred,' but did not recur to the subject.

1816. January 15th was the day of the separation.

1816. In the summer was begun,

1817. In May was finished

'*Manfred*.' This last poem of the series had its origin in something more of *existence* than was found among the Alps. Lord Byron wrote to Mr. Murray: "It was the Steinbach and the Jungfrau, and something else, much more than Faustus, that made me write 'Manfred.'" And again: "Send me the rest; and also page 270, where there is 'an account of the supposed origin of this dreadful story;' in which, by the way, whatever it may be, the conjecturer is out, and knows nothing of the matter. I had a better origin than he can devise or divine, for the soul of him." Is it possible to doubt that the "dreadful story" of the 'Bride of Abydos,' of the 'Corsair,' of the 'Song' of May, 1814, and of 'Manfred,' had one common origin in that event which the poet with, what Lord Broughton calls, "his dangerous sincerity," told, darkly, in his journal and letters, beginning in November, 1813? Astarte has the gentle powers of Zuleika, Medora, and Francesca, the "soft heart," the "soul though soft," the "soft word," the "fond fidelity," of which the domestic pieces tell. Her love for Manfred has destroyed

1820, June. vol. xi. p. 71.

1817, July 9. vol. iv. p. 43.

'Blackwood,' January, 1870, p. 138.

her; and, in the world of spirits, she has become a thing he dared not think upon.

——— What is she?
What is she now? a sufferer for my sins—
A thing I dare not think upon—
Say that thou loath'st me not—that I do bear
This punishment for both—that thou wilt be
One of the blessed.

Moore, vol. xi. p. 38, act 2, scene 2, p. 47. scene 4.

There is a passage in 'Manfred' which, compared with a couplet in the 'Epistle to Augusta,' seems to unveil the thought that ran through—through—

—— her whom of all earthly things
That lived, the only thing he seemed to love,—
As he, indeed, by blood was bound to do,
The lady Astarte, his ———

'Manfred,' act 3, scene 3. Moore, vol. xi. p. 63.

And even at moments I could think I see
Some living thing to love—but none like thee.

'Epistle to Augusta,' stanza vii. Moore, vol. x. p. 203.

Manfred is the Corsair, with supernatural power and pride, and contempt of the creatures of clay that gird him. With affected scorn of the beings of whom he is one, hating to be so, he anticipates the judgment which would have driven him forth to range with the bestial herds; and, having thus precluded the censure of his fellows, the sin blotted out of the 'Bride of Abydos,' concealed in 'Conrad,' and avowed by Hugo only because it had been discovered, is told shamelessly—not in shameless words, but with an audacious spirit which, at the hour of death, finds

comfort in the boast that the crime was of his own determinate resolution, and not a suggestion of the devil :—

Moore, vol. xi. p. 70. 'Manfred,' act 3, scene 4.

> *Thou* didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;
> I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey—
> But was my own destroyer, and will be
> My own, hereafter.—Back ye baffled fiends!

1817, July and August. vol. iv. pp. 43, 49, 50, 52.

Lord Byron was eager to learn, and Mr. Murray as careful to conceal, what the publisher thought, and what the world said of 'Manfred.' Thrice he complained that Murray, who had kept back half a published criticism which he professed to send, would not speak. He suspected a cause for the silence, and concluded his part of the correspondence by the assurance that he was prepared to hear, not of the mere paltry petty disappointments of an author, but things more serious.

After the year 1817 he ceased to dwell, with any emotion, upon the subject which had so much agitated his mind through four years. In after years it was coldly in his thoughts. In the year 1820 he translated Dante's brief tale of 'Francesca di Rimini,' and boasted that it was the cream of translations. In 1821 he meditated a tragedy on her story, and wrote 'Cain,' in which the old theme of vehement passion was made a subject for impious speculation. Towards the close of 1817 began the orgies of the Mocenigo palace. Between the

vol. iv. pp. 293, 300; vol. v. p. 89; vol. xiv. p. 2.

beginning of that year and the month of September or November, his sister was mentioned by him in fourteen letters, to his constant correspondents, Mr. Moore and Mr. Murray. In the seven following years he mentions her but seven times.

One touch of humanity runs through the whole series of poems, and intimates that the fear of judgment to come had not been wholly cast away. The agony of remorse is sharpest in the contemplation of the eternal misery of his partaker in guilt. It may be that the appeals to him for mercy to her soul had not fallen altogether unheeded. But the pang was no more enduring than the tenderness of the 'Farewell.' To use his own words: it lasts "not a moment after the pen is off the paper." He could not but know the effect which 'Parisina' and 'Manfred' must work, and might work. Allow that he was constrained to write, lest, as his journal says, he should die or go mad; but what was the excuse for publication, by which another heart must have been gnawed and another imagination might have been moved to evil. He has told the excuse. "Not to print is *physically* impossible," he cried out, when advised not to publish the 'Bride of Abydos.' He could not live without the applause of the creatures whom he affected to despise. Defying conscience, knowing that he could *not* bear the punishment for both, to still a craving vanity, he would have offered up his victim to "the worm

Mrs. Stowe, p. 160.

Moore, vol. xiv. p. 104.

See also vol. v. p. 113.

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that will not sleep, and never dies." We are now bidden to sacrifice to his fame the memory of the stainless woman who strove to reclaim him. But the "good work" of the 'Quarterly' will not be accomplished. Lord Byron's intellectual power is universally acknowledged, and with no faint praise. Beyond that acknowledgment what more than pity can be offered, in the words of the greater poet, who has told us that the most eloquent of fallen spirits was the most ignoble? We applaud his art, but the man we deplore, and far above him honour those who display sublime and pure thoughts without transgression. His name may point a better moral than that which is taught by our English censor: "Among all the vices which it is necessary to subdue in order to build up the human character, there is none to be compared in strength or in virulence with that of impurity. It can outlive and kill a thousand virtues; it can corrupt the most generous heart; it can madden the soberest intellect; it can debase the loftiest imagination."

'Quarterly,' January, 1870, p. 250.

Dr. Temple.

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